

Islam and Communism

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by

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Preface

SINCE the time of the Russian Communist Revolution and more so since the consolidation and the ever-growing military strength of Russia, Communism has been a challenge to the established order of things. Religion, ethics, economics, politics, in short the entire fabric of human relations and the concepts on which they are based have felt the impact of the iconoclastic zeal of this revolutionary cataclysm. The direct or indirect repercussions of this challenge are so vast and many-sided that it is impossible for any thinker or reformer to ignore it. It is a powerful influence in the present-day world both for good and for evil. The truest thing said about the Russian Communist experiment is that most of the good things said about Russia are true and most of the bad things said about Russia are also true. The Czarist Russia was not a paradise of humanity. It was monarchic, feudal, medieval and tyrannical, untouched by the liberal movements of the West. Its religion was corrupt, its church was decadent, its priests were superstitious and obscurantist, its economy was rickety and the toleration of individual liberty was non-existent. There was very little literacy in the entire realm, many parts of which were left in utter ignorance to wallow in mental subjection. Those who struggled for elementary human liberties were frozen to death in Siberia or had to flee the country to live in exile. If the conditions in any country cried for a revolution it was Russia. Marx, the prophet of Communism, thought mostly of industrial exploitation of the wage-earning proletariat of the West and diagnosed mostly the ills of industrial capitalism. He prophesied that revolution would come first in the countries industrially most developed. He paid no great attention to

the exploited peasantry which existed in all the countries still living in the agricultural stage.) History belied this prophecy of Marx along with many other prophecies about the inevitability and perpetually deteriorating conditions of factory workers in every country. Marx could not have envisaged a fragment of what happened in the industrially most backward country of the West.

In the Russian Revolution that shook the entire socio-economic structure of a vast realm, there was justified as well as unjustified violence. Fanatics of the new idea had to fight ruthlessly with the fanatics of the old order. There was added to it the unjustifiable intervention of Western imperialistic and capitalistic powers. Good and evil were hopelessly mixed. The movement did not originate in any gradual evolution of liberal democracy and in the growing consciousness of the right of the individual personality to a free and unhampered development within the framework of law and order; therefore the results of reconstruction and the ideology at the basis of it took a turn which, however beneficial in certain material aspects, have been detrimental to the basic values of humanity. Humanity is not identified with economics or the improved standard of living of the common man, however necessary it may be as a foundation of a liberal superstructure.

The pendulum of human collective existence has been swinging between liberty and order, and it has been always difficult to hold a balance between the two. Unrestricted liberty would neither create nor consolidate any social or political structure; a stream remains a stream only if it flows between the banks. On the other hand, too much of order penetrating the thought and private life of the individual, leaving him no elbow room for free thinking and free initiative in the moulding of one's life as one thinks fit, would certainly lead to the deadening of the human spirit which breathes freely and creates only when there are no external compulsions. Russia has moved too much towards regimentation which may produce more material goods but hampers advance-

ment towards the good which all great idealists, spiritualists and religious genuses besides some great artists and literary men have aimed at. Russia aims only at more production and more reproduction for material and military strength. It has adopted a materialistic ideology which is avowedly atheistic shunning all idealistic philosophies which are suspected to lead to a spiritual view of life. In Russia there is much more education now than in the pre-Revolution days. Literacy has mounted up by leaps and bounds; there are opportunities for everyone who is fit to receive any kind of education. But like everything else this education too is regimented, because this education is not free ideologically. From infancy onwards the whole population is psychologically conditioned to accept dialectical materialism as a substitute for religion. Science, art and literature must mould themselves on this ideology. Most of what has gone before is dubbed as decadent bourgeois production reflecting the exploiting conditions of a classified society. To start with, a minority that captured power imposed its ideology by a reign of terror. The opponents have been liquidated in successive purges. Only the conformists and their progeny is left which is completely conditioned by systematic indoctrination. But within the ruling minority itself there is struggle for power. All totalitarianism is based on force and on denial of essential personal freedom; fundamental differences are resolved only by violent methods.

For lovers of human liberties all types of totalitarianism are a serious threat. The freedom achieved by human beings in other systems still has its defects and limitations but it is a fruit of long struggles and martyrdoms suffered in the cause of freedom. A realm where people are not free to educate themselves as they like, where thoughts and emotions are controlled, where art and literature are not free, where the creativity of the human spirit is smothered, reduces all life to dead mechanism. The bees and the termites achieved a perfect type of Communism millions of years ago. With the human beings Nature experimented with freedom. The

experiment was hazardous and continues to be so, but that is the destiny of man which the process of evolution has been realising slowly and steadily.

Between Islam and atheistic, totalitarian Communism there can be no compromise so far as the ideological basis of the two is concerned. In this book I have talked mostly of Islam but not of the Muslim countries and peoples in their present state. Muslim peoples, who made great contributions to human civilisation and culture when the momentum imparted by Islam was still vital and dynamic, have now been left behind in the race. There is intellectual and scientific backwardness and there is technological inefficiency and lack of know-how. All of these countries require accelerated evolution with phases approaching a revolution. But everywhere the best reformers and profound thinkers believe that a glorious renaissance and reconstruction is achievable on the basis of a pure Islamic ideology which planned to organise a society of free men, where exploitation of man by man would not be possible, where monarchies would give place to democratic republics, where feudalism and blood-sucking landlordism would be wiped out, where the State would become a Welfare State and not a Police State and where people would not be tyrannised for thinking freely. Islam created a just balance between order and liberty. There is poverty as well as exploitation in many Muslim countries and the sufferers in despair sometimes get mentally prepared to barter their unfruitful liberties for a totalitarian regime which would manage to give them better material conditions. They hear that conditions in China too have improved after the sweeping away of Chiang Kai-shek's degenerate regime. I have not dealt in this book with Chinese Communism because the book was written three years before the Chinese Revolution. Maybe the Chinese are not following the Russian pattern and their socialistic reconstruction may in its adaptation to Chinese temperament and Chinese conditions evolve a new mode of life that is not an imitation of the Russian model. The Muslim countries too stand in need of socialistic reforms

but I am convinced that if the Muslims go back to the original Qur'anic ideology and take their inspiration from the life of the Prophet and the lives of those whose personalities and outlooks were moulded by his teaching and influence, they can create models of social and political behaviour that are superior to both the ideologies at present engaged in a cold war. The ideal of Islam is to create one world and one humanity that rises superior to castes and classes and the narrow nationalism of the West that has worked so much havoc. If Islam can make no compromise with ideological Communism, it would repudiate with equal force the racialism and colonialism of imperialistic Western powers like France and would consider it a disgrace to associate itself with the racial Fascism of South Africa. The Western writers talk of the free world as opposed to the countries under Communist control. But this so-called 'free world' is not yet free for all; however, it may be free for the ruling classes. Nor is the Muslim world at present free according to the conception of freedom in unsullied Islam. The book is a comparative study in ideologies only; let no one taunt the author with the bad conditions of the Muslim world at present. Even the Russian ideologists confess that they are not yet Communists—they are gradually only aiming at it; they have in their heads an ideal picture of a Communist State and Society. Similar is the case with the Muslims; the best of their thinkers and reformers are gradually aiming at the objectification of Islam in laws and institutions; it yet remains for them to justify the superiority of Islam in actual practice.

Contents

PREFACE	..	..	..	..	..	iii
CHAPTERS						
1. THE VACUUM	..	..	..	..	..	1
2. DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM	..	..	..	..	..	10
3. HISTORICAL MATERIALISM	..	..	..	..	..	21
4. ISLAMIC THEISM <i>versus</i> DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM	..	..	..	..	..	43 ✓
5. THE ETHICS OF MARXISM	..	..	..	..	..	56
6. RELIGION IN SOVIET RUSSIA	..	..	..	..	..	67
7. DISILLUSIONMENT	..	..	..	..	..	85
8. IMPACT OF COMMUNISM ON THE MUSLIM WORLD	..	..	..	..	..	93
9. COMMUNISM AND IQBAL	..	..	..	..	..	111 ✓
10. ISLAMIC DEMOCRACY	..	..	..	..	..	131 ✓
11. THE INDIVIDUAL, THE SOCIETY AND THE STATE	..	..	..	..	..	162 ✓
12. ISLAMIC SOCIALISM	..	..	..	..	..	170
13. THE FOUNDATIONS OF ISLAMIC ECONOMICS	..	..	..	..	..	199 ✓
14. RECAPITULATION	..	..	..	..	..	216

1

The Vacuum

IT WAS one of the universally accepted concepts in Greek philosophy that Nature abhors a vacuum. Nature is a continuum and plenum with no gaps. Wherever the natural forces tend to create a gap, some counteracting phenomena rush in to fill it. There is a Persian proverb that empty, uninhabited houses become haunted by ghosts for it is unnatural for a house to remain uninhabited. The principle of abhorrence of a vacuum works also in human life and the human soul too is subject to this law. An idle or empty mind is made proverbially the devil's workshop. Human life can retain its vigour and equilibrium if it is lived in pursuance of an all-embracing purpose. Man is a worshipping animal; he is compelled to adore some thing or some being higher than himself; man desires to be lifted out of his narrow, cramping individuality. In the animistic and polytheistic stages of human belief man felt at home in his universe even when some forces around him were deemed to be hostile and had to be propitiated. Every event was replete with supernatural meaning for him. All natural phenomena were deified and perpetual give-and-take with gods made every phase of life purposeful.

In the West the Graeco-Roman civilisation had for centuries created its own meaning and adaptations. The advent of Christianity destroyed that *weltanschauung* and replaced it with a new outlook. The Roman Catholic Church inheriting the temporal organisation of the Roman Empire infused it with new ideals to co-ordinate all life; life in every aspect had to be recast in this new mould. The natural and the supernatural were welded

into one whole. It is a matter of dispute whether the new outlook was superior on the whole to the one that it destroyed and replaced. According to Professor Toynbee, the oldest and the most persistent view is that Christianity was the destroyer of the civilisation within whose framework it grew up. He says, 'That was, I suppose, the view of Emperor Marcus as far as he was aware of the presence of Christianity in this world. It was most emphatically and violently the view of Emperor Julian, and it was also the view of the English historian Gibbon who recorded the decline and fall of the Roman Empire long after the event. In the last chapter of Gibbon's history there is one sentence in which he sums up the theme of the whole work. Looking back he says, "I have described the triumph of barbarism and religion." Gibbon has recorded this verdict after having given an extraordinary majestic description of the Roman Empire at peace.' Gibbon evidently means that the Christian way of life was inferior and it was no gain for humanity to have adopted it in preference to the Graeco-Roman civilisation. It is not our purpose in this chapter to pass a judgement of value by comparing the two ways of life. For the purposes of our topic it is sufficient to note that the Roman Catholic Church created a moral, intellectual and social unity on the basis of a definite belief shared by the kings, the barons, the peasants, the serfs and the slaves. People generally understood their relation to the world in which they lived and had also a picture in their mind of the life hereafter.

This all-embracing unity of life was shaken by the Renaissance and the Reformation. Renaissance revived some of the values of the Graeco-Roman culture and the Reformation granted the individual conscience considerable freedom in the matter of faith and action. Free, scientific and rationalistic development was the result of this liberation of the human spirit. Men began to think independently about the nature of existence and man's place in it. Philosophy was now no more the handmaiden of theology. Free inquiry began to be

substituted for established traditional beliefs. The pendulum of human history has been swinging between liberty and order. Social stability and progress require an equilibrium between the two. The excess of liberty leads to anarchic individualism in thought and action and the rigidity of order hampers the enrichment and progress of life. Life regulated and regimented in all its details and the philosophy of life standardised on the basis of dogmatic religion had doubtless created an order and equilibrium, but intellectually and culturally it was also responsible for long centuries of darkness. But the transition from order to liberty was not smooth. The Church fought against heresies and rising individualism fought for fundamental liberties. The fight was long and bitter, because every party was fighting for a conviction. One universal order was split up into many orders and the unity of Western civilisation was pulverised by the multiplicity of States and nationalities jealous of their isolated sovereignties. It is immaterial what the ruling passion of an individual or a group is; so long as a firm conviction is there which enlists in its service the entire energies of persons, life is filled with a meaning and a motive. Convictions of whatever complexion release human energies; it is only scepticism which paralyses them. The rise of nationalism and industrialism in Europe awakened immense forces and the development of scientific rationalism created a belief in inevitable progress. In the initial stages of scientific development science did not openly clash with religion. Copernicus dedicated his book on the heliocentric theory to the Pope. Descartes, starting with individual consciousness as the bedrock of all belief and laying the foundation of mathematics and physical science, could easily reconcile it with theism. Kant's free inquiries and Critiques were also led by circuitous paths to belief in God, freedom and immortality. Spinoza identified his Substance with God and, although intoxicated by an intellectual love of an impersonal reality, he was still considered to be a God-intoxicated man. Hegel's Absolute whose fundamental attribute was

his dialectic, having not the remotest resemblance to the God of theism, could still be called by that name. For a long time the superstructure of belief showed no obvious cracks but the foundations were being gradually and progressively undermined. Hume had shown with the force of irrefutable logic that neither the matter of the materialists could be proved to exist as self-subsistent substance as Berkeley had demonstrated, nor could the existence of the soul be proved as an entity apart from the psychological processes.

Side by side with this philosophical development mechanistic materialism was advancing with great strides and the French materialists had established themselves as leaders of scientific rationalism. When Napoleon asked Laplace as to why he had not mentioned God even once in his book on the creation of the heavenly bodies, he replied: 'Sire, He was not needed'. It has been rightly remarked that every advance in naturalistic science has dragged down man from his pedestal and diminished his sense of dignity and importance. The process may be said to have been started by Copernicus. Man had considered himself to be the centre of the universe. As the whole drama of creation revolved round his destiny, the earth that was his abode was naturally considered to be the centre round which the sun and the other heavenly bodies performed their revolutions. But the heliocentric theory proved that the earth was no more important than any other star or planet. As the earth was an atom in the vast astronomical universe, man was an insignificant atom in a concourse of atoms. All conceptions of heaven and earth on which dogmatic theology had built its superstructure were demolished. When mechanistic science, in alliance with astronomy, was sabotaging religious belief and convincing man that only blind matter is the ultimate reality, another deadly blow to the importance of man was struck by Darwin. Heretofore the chief argument for theism had been the teleological argument, the argument from the wonderful adaptations in the structure of the organism. Now the

movements of heavenly bodies along with their creation were supposed to have been explained by the non-purposive laws of thermodynamics and Darwin brought an array of proofs that beauty and order in organic nature were not the results of divine intelligence or beneficent providence but the chance-products of a ruthless struggle for existence.

In short, the physicists, biologists, astronomers, anthropologists and social scientists of various types along with the economists co-operated in depriving existence of all purpose and draining away, step by step, all meaning from the life of man. However, till before World War I life in the West was still sustained by hopes and illusions which engendered some zest for life. Belief in progress and the inherent rationality of man still animated some breasts. The Armageddon of 1914-18, however, shattered all optimism. The progress of science proved not to have civilized man but to have placed formidable engines of destruction at the disposal of ruthless collective egoism. The philosophers, scientists, even socialists of all countries and clergymen, the servants of the Prince of Peace, were found on opposite sides of the barricades in the struggle to annihilate one another. In wars all moral values are inverted and the ordinary time-honoured distinction between good and evil vanishes. Cruelty and hatred are preached from the press, the platform and the pulpit; fear and anger become dominant emotions. The foundations of religion had already been sapped and now religion in action was found to be an ally of oppression. The contradictions between profession and action came to the surface. The clergymen in the battlefield and even religious-minded persons like Montgomery read the Sermon on the Mount to the troops before heavy bombardment or bayonet charge by Christians against Christians.

The war left a legacy of material as well as moral chaos. The war to end all wars and make the world safe for democracy ended in wider schemes of exploitation on the part of victors and feelings of frustration and revenge

on the part of the vanquished. In the economic and social dislocation that followed, the victors and the vanquished both found it difficult, if not impossible, to restore the old equilibrium. All idealism was exploded and man was everywhere reduced to seeking security for mere physical existence. People became ready to barter their cherished liberties, which had not availed, for minimum economic security. Life seemed to have no purpose left except to sustain itself. Political liberty and economic individualism had been tried and found wanting. The egoistic hedonism popularised by the utilitarians had preached the doctrine that each individual could be trusted to look after his own interests far better than anyone else and it was not the business of the State to interfere in the relations between individuals. Now it was found that democracy based on this doctrine of individual liberty had not secured the well-being of the common man.

Religion had ceased to be a guiding factor in the life of the Western nations and its place had been taken by scientific rationalism and nationalism; the place vacated by the gods of religion was occupied by these two deities. Scientific rationalism denied the universality or objectivity of all human values and left every man to find what values he could to serve his temporary interests. Similarly, nationalism based on *laissez-faire* and political democracy was discovered by the Communists to be a deception created by capitalism. The Communists found the remedy of all evils in the strengthening of the proletariat of the world and the Fascists preached the fortification of exclusive racial nationalism by complete subordination of the individual to the State which should be worshipped as a super-individual deity. People had ceased to believe in the God of love and the progressive realisation of universal values. But mankind could not live without faith. A vacuum had been created in their lives which had to be filled. Man has the need to believe in something that would engage his entire personality in the pursuit of an ideal, creating a passion for living. Men and women in the West had been for

the most part left without any religion; for them life had ceased to have any meaning. The rationalistic development in the Western countries had made the return to any kind of official religion or orthodoxy impossible; the vacuum had to be filled. Communism and Fascism both attempted to step in as substitutes for traditional religion. They sprang up as spiritual substitutes. Cannon F.R. Barry in *What Had Christianity to Say* summarises this view as follows: 'Before all else man is a worshipper. From his earliest appearance in history he has been building his pathetic altars, stretching forth his hands to the unknown God. This is persistent through all the mazes of his social and religious record, through all its perversions and unlovely forms, its ignorance, its cruelty and terror—man's ineradicable quest for God, in Whom alone he can find rest and fulfilment. If he cannot find God in heaven, he must fall down before a God on earth, and deify some idol of his own making.' Joad remarks that this view is borne out by the belief of a German Nazi writer that the only form in which he could accept Christ is in the character of 'a true Hitler nature'.

Man's inherent tendency to worship some object other than himself had found satisfaction for some time in the cult of national deities set up by the Reformation which virtually broke up the unity of Western life into discrete national entities. The after-effects of the Great War, however, awakened the Western mind to the unreality and hollowness of this plurality of gods. The quest for unity and the search for integration demanded a new social and political theory which could gather up the broken threads of life into a single, all-embracing unity. This was an opportunity for the religious leaders of Christianity to re-establish their authority by presenting a satisfying and clear-cut picture of their religion, freed of all its accretions and distortions. If they had been able to produce a practicable programme of life derived from Christianity, Europe might have relinquished its materialistic attitude and started a life of renewed vigour under the aegis of religion and spiritualism. But this was not to

be. The religious leaders of Western Europe were not equal to their task, however anxious they might have been to reclaim civilised mankind from the nightmare of godless materialism. It was, therefore, a great opportunity for the forces of atheism to continue their march unopposed. Dialectical materialism of the Communists stepped into the vacuum created by the dethronement of national deities. It satisfied the basic urge towards integration and unity. Instead of a multiplicity of national States each contending and fighting against the other for the goods of life, Communism conjured up the vision of one world under the rule of workers hitherto suppressed and downtrodden. Instead of antagonistic classes engaged in a cut-throat competition and perpetually at war with each other, it promised a society free from the conflicts of groups and classes and united under the banner of a single world proletariat. Instead of multiple angles of vision from which life's problems were being approached and tackled some from the economic, some from the political and some from the religious viewpoint, it provided a unified outlook which could see the inter-relatedness of economics, politics and religion and which denied the claim of each separate sphere to be governed by independent laws. Dialectical materialism of the Communists thus integrated and unified broken harmonies. Naturally it attracted the soul of the Western people long distracted by a multiplicity of gods in conflict.

But its appeal had a far deeper origin. The Western mind had already been given a materialistic bias by the eighteenth-century science and rationalism. The obscurantism and blindness of the churches and their insensate opposition to scientific theories, which did not much affect religion, had driven the leaders of European enlightenment into the camp of scepticism or atheism. In their revulsion against a corrupt and garbled version of Christianity they developed a deep-rooted prejudice against all spiritual attitudes. European mind which was scientific in everything else became most unscientific in whatever related to religion and the world of human

spirit. This anti-religious and atheistic tradition deeply coloured all Western thought and science and its legacy was still active when Communism started the second and final phase of militant godlessness. Dialectical materialism of the Communists, being only a further instalment of the mechanical materialism sanctified by the eighteenth-century Europe, naturally fell on willing ears. The minds of men had already been prepared for its reception. Machiavelli and Darwin had done much spade work for Marx and Lenin. Dialectical materialism was merely the culmination of a process that began in the conflict of science with religion in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Dialectical Materialism

PHILOSOPHY has always played a large part in the education of German youth in the universities. During the student days of Marx, Hegel was the philosopher most in vogue. Hegel identified knowledge with reality. For him the universe was not a static reality but a process which was the progressive unfolding of the Absolute Idea which he, in a way, regarded as God, although God, as so conceived, was not the personal God of theism or a providence to whom one could pray. Hegel's philosophy was interpreted in divergent ways by many thinkers after him. Marx rejected the transcendentalism of Hegel and replaced his Absolute Idea with Eternal Nature conceived as matter, but he retained the basic pattern of the Hegelian dialectic. Marx agreed with Hegel that all reality unfolds itself dialectically. The motive force of all movement and change is the contradiction inherent in every phase of existence. Every position which he called thesis is negated by its opposite, the antithesis, and this negation results in a synthesis which transcends both by taking up in itself the valuable elements of the thesis and the antithesis. The term 'Dialectic' is borrowed from Greek philosophy. In the Platonic dialogues Socrates proceeded to point out the contradiction involved in the argument of an opponent, and truth was finally reached by resolving one contradiction after another. The Greek conception of truth was that it is self-consistent and one could reach it only by the gradual elimination of inconsistencies. For Hegel, on the contrary, contradiction is the driving force of all thought and all Nature. All reality develops through contradictions. For the Greeks ultimate

reality was static, consisting of unchanging ideas or forms. All change had an element of contingency and chance; all becoming was contaminated with non-being. The ideal of life is to realise the eternal idea and to contemplate its immutable essence. Hegel promulgated a completely opposite doctrine. All reality is dynamic and this dynamism consists of perpetual creation of opposites with a constantly advancing synthesis. It is only through opposition that progress towards reality and truth is possible. But opposition alone would not create or preserve anything. The synthesis of opposites brings all process nearer to reality. No synthesis is final because of the defect inherent in it. This process of conflict and reconciliation goes on in reality as well as in thought.

Marx accepted this pattern of Hegelian dialectic as absolute truth revealing the nature of all reality. As a revolutionary, Marx was naturally attracted to the dialectic because it depicted conflict and change as the essence of all existence. A view of ultimate reality as eternally changeless tends more to contemplation than to action. Marx said that reality is not there to contemplate but to change; truth is not the mirroring of any static reality. He thought if reality is represented in fixed and unchangeable terms, it provides a convenient intellectual instrument for the reactionaries.

Modern philosophy, particularly since Kant, began to grapple again, as it had done in the beginning of Greek speculation, with the problem of *being* and *becoming* or the question of appearance and reality. Marxism has laid great emphasis on the doctrine that the philosophy of every epoch is only the reflection of economic and social forces which predominate in that epoch. But one may interpret Marxian philosophy also not as a revelation of the nature of things as they are, but a reflection or intellectual justification of the dynamism of rapidly expanding industrial civilisation. Nineteenth century was a period of rapid changes brought about by scientific and industrial development. Conquest of Nature was proceeding apace.

Economic, social and political relations were assuming new shapes; everywhere the old order was changing, yielding place to new. Being was everywhere in the grip of becoming. Kant had made the human mind as the architect of the phenomenal universe and had put forward the nebular hypothesis to explain the formation of the heavenly bodies which were considered by the ancient world as eternal, unchanging deities. Darwin revolutionised the study of Nature by his hypothesis of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest which explained the emergence of new species with better adaptation to environment. Spencer explained all aspects of reality including all human institutions according to his concept of evolution as starting from comparative homogeneity to unified heterogeneity. The entire century was dominated by a firm belief in change and progress. Religious convictions were at first greatly disturbed and felt out of joint, but gradually theism recovered its faith by accepting the findings of evolution as a divine mode of progressive creation. Spencer had predicted that things were moving towards unification of diversities and a theistic poet like Tennyson concurred by singing:

One God who ever lives and loves
 One God, one Law, one Element
 And one far-off divine event
 To which the whole creation moves.

Belief in evolution and progress was the spirit of the age. Hegelian dialectic was one way of conceiving progress and change. Hegelian absolute was dynamic; it was neither matter nor mind but absolute reason; Nature as well as mind were its progressive phases, but the absolute comprised both and transcended both.

But there was another aspect of nineteenth-century thought. The rapid progress in physical sciences had engendered the belief that all reality is material; nothing is real which cannot be weighed and measured. Every event is a necessary product of the laws of matter and motion. Even the mind of man is the product of a

complicated functioning of the atoms of the brain; the brain emits thought as the candle emits light. The mind has no substantive reality. It is not even a phenomenon; it was called an epiphenomenon, i.e. an ineffective by-product of natural and efficient physical phenomena. Marx was deeply impressed by nineteenth-century materialism, chiefly by Ludwig Feuerbach, who had sought to show in his *Essence of Christianity* (1841) that religion reflected man's physical needs. He also equated speculative idealistic philosophy with religion. He was dismissed from his university for preaching the formula: 'Der Mensch ist was er isst' (Man is what he eats). He was so convinced of man's ideas and actions being products of his food that he ascribed the 1848 revolutions to the fact that the working class lived on a diet of potatoes instead of beans which produce more energy. Marx took up the idea of Feuerbach that all the products of the human mind, religion and ethics, art and philosophy, are the reflections of material conditions. The world of Nature exists independently of one's perception or thinking, and life as well as consciousness are natural phenomena which arise under certain favourable conditions, chance-products of the conglomeration of atoms, which would disappear if conditions become unfavourable. In the Introduction to the first volume of *Capital*, Marx writes:

My own dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. For Hegel, the thinking process is the *deni-urge* (creator) of the real world, and the real world is only the outward manifestation of the Idea. With men, on the other hand, the Ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into terms of thought.

Marx admits that Hegel's dialectic is the basic pattern, but only after it has been stripped of its mystical form. Marx also said that he had found Hegel standing on his head and he had 'set him the right way up'. But it would be a misreading of Hegel to say that he had opposed mind to matter and considered mind as fundamental. Hegel had not opposed mind to matter in the way the

subjective idealism of Berkeley and Kant had done. Hegel's absolute idea is neither mind nor matter, but a self-existent realm of being. Croce has criticised the Marxists in this respect who assert that Hegel regarded the mind as real and matter as a reflection of mind, and that Marx inverted the position.

In order to fortify himself in his materialism, Marx tried to prove that he took nothing from Hegel except his triad of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, which he found to be true about the realm of material nature. As a matter of fact he owes much more to Hegel than he is prepared to acknowledge. As a consistent materialist, he should have thought of matter as unconscious and purposeless. But the matter of Marx retains the essence of the absolute of Hegel. Hegel's dialectic is a guarantee of the progressive creation and conservation of values; the dynamic progress of the absolute is teleological. Matter as such should have neither values nor purposes, but Marx endows matter with purposive dialectical movement in which every stage of synthesis is necessarily higher than both the thesis and the antithesis. Marx tries to despiritualise matter on the one hand, and, on the other hand, reads into its essence the purposes that could only be the property of the spirit. The material world follows only physical laws which guarantee neither the creation nor the progressive amelioration of values. Material processes cannot develop teleologically because purpose is not an attribute of matter. The materialism of Marx suffers from the same contradiction as the evolutionary materialism of Herbert Spencer. Spencer's unconscious, blind, mechanistic matter somehow takes care to preserve and advance the life-values that it creates; so does the presumably unspiritual matter of Marx which advances towards a proletarian revolution steadily with a logic and a method which could emerge only from a goal-seeking spirit.

As the dialectic of Marx, notwithstanding some similarities, differs from the dialectic of Hegel, so the materialism of Marx differs in some essentials from the

materialism of his contemporaries. Materialism in the seventeenth century developed on mechanistic lines. According to this view, matter from all eternity has followed fixed laws. The materialism of Diderot, Holbach and Laplace was mechanistic, following the unchangeable mathematical laws of motion. The Marxists do not agree with the mechanistic view of matter because it leaves no room for development. The purpose of Marx was neither metaphysical nor epistemological. He was primarily a revolutionary. The purely mechanical explanation of the universe did not fit into his purposes. He wanted development and revolutionary change. He was not interested in a theory of matter as such. For him all discussion as to the nature of matter would remain sterile if it did not furnish a guide to revolutionary action. For him it was axiomatic that the material world is the fundamental reality, but all life is action and knowledge is not concerned with the mirroring of reality. We deal with matter through the medium of sensations, but sensations are stimuli which demand action and reaction. His theory of knowledge is essentially pragmatic and instrumentalist; in this respect he is a precursor of Charles Pierce and William James. He said what every pragmatist has said and elaborated after him that we only perceive a thing as a part of the process of acting on it. Marx is a voluntarist and not an intellectualist. Intellectualistic materialism leads only to agnosticism. No man of action can afford to suspend his judgement about the ultimate nature of reality, because all scepticism tends to paralyse action. Carew Hunt, the author of *Theory and Practice of Communism*, sums up the Marxian view of materialism as follows:

When, therefore, a party member is given instruction in Marxist ideology, the first thing that is impressed on him is that there exist, and can only exist, two possible philosophical positions, idealism and materialism, the attitude adopted by Engels in his *Ludwig Feuerbach* and later taken over by Lenin, who held that they reflect the class-division of society. He is told that there are many forms of idealism, but all assert that mind is primary, and that matter, if it has any reality at all, is secondary. Idealism

contends that we can have no final knowledge of the world of phenomena because such knowledge is conditioned by our senses. A knowledge of 'things in themselves' is thus impossible. To men born with green or red spectacles the snow will appear green or red and they have no means of discovering that it is, in fact, neither. On the other hand, materialism insists that reality is not mind but matter, that the existence of matter precedes that of mind; that the material world, so far from existing only in our minds, possesses an objective existence apart from our perception of it, and that we can, therefore, obtain a knowledge of the world, which, though incomplete, like a jigsaw puzzle from which certain parts are missing, contains an indestructible core of absolute truth which is continually growing as our knowledge increases. Dialectical materialism is thus represented as the only scientific explanation of reality; while idealism is unscientific and is always coupled with religion, both having their roots in ignorance, and being by their very nature hostile to science, just as a witch-doctor will always resist a scientific explanation of disease. As the dialectic does not allow for three-cornered fights, there can be no intermediate position, and agnostics who hold the problem of the ultimate nature of reality to be insoluble are simply idealists who lack the courage of their convictions.

Marxian Communism has a distinctive theory of being and a doctrine of knowledge. For it being is essentially non-moral and non-spiritual. Mind is a reflection of the interplay of physical forces and at the social level throughout history it has been building only its offensive and defensive strategy in class-struggles. Belief in gods or one God or providence or belief in survival served only as instruments in this struggle. When the mind is relegated to the position of a by-product and real being belongs only to unconscious matter, human ideas and ideals along with free will cease to have any substance. All art, all philosophy and all religion are the superstructure or the war-paint of the constants in the sheer physical struggle for existence. Marxism repudiates not only all religion but all idealism of any kind; for it, entire human history consists of the struggle of opposites, negations and negations of negations leading ultimately to a classless society whose chief achievement would be maximum production of material goods and its equitable distribution. Man is essentially body and the *summum bonum* of his

existence and the ultimate goal at which he should aim is bodily welfare and physical security. No materialistic creed, if it is self-consistent, can have any ethics at all. Ethics is a normative science and is based on not what is but what ought to be, and, as Kant said, a moral 'ought' or obligation would be meaningless if somehow the human mind is not free to choose between alternative courses of action. Materialism and absolute determinism must go together and hence there is no point in exhorting people to act otherwise than they must. If any ethics can move a few paces alongside materialism it is psychological hedonism which, like Bentham, denies all qualitative differences between pleasures; intellectual, moral and aesthetic pleasures are equated with physical pleasures. Physical pleasures are more real because they affect the body which is a more fundamental reality than mind. Materialism cannot consistently demonstrate why an individual should sacrifice the chances of physical security and pleasure for the sake of another individual or a remote entity like the nation or the brotherhood of man, or why physical life which is the only life should be jeopardised or sacrificed for the establishment of social justice or a classless society for posterity. The dialectical materialist is no more consistent than any other type of materialist. Mechanistic materialism denies the reality of mind and freedom outright and makes all phases of life physically determined. Dialectical materialism introduces a new kind of determinism; the inevitable march of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Freedom can be a characteristic of the spirit or the mind which is not a link in the chain of inexorable physical causation, but if mind is not a primary reality, where can freedom reside? The Marxist revolutionaries are exhorted to make sacrifices for an ideal, but if the ideal is realising itself through a dialectical process, why not trust that process to achieve its goal? Sacrifice means either the suppression of physical desires for supraphysical aims or for the ultimate welfare of the soul. But for a consistent materialist there could be no

supraphysical aims and any sacrifice could be justified only on the basis of a hedonistic calculus which takes only the individual's present and future pleasure into consideration. A Marxist revolutionary introduces from the backdoor a sense of freedom and moral obligation which do not logically follow from his dialectical materialism. Marx and Engels preached a variety of materialism at a time when materialism of one type or another was still scientifically a plausible doctrine. But now during the last three decades materialism is being gradually repudiated by some of the great scientists and philosophers of repute. Return to the old types of idealism may not be possible, but one thing is certain that materialism as a doctrine of being and knowledge is dead beyond any hope of revival. The dialectic of philosophical and scientific thought has already negated it. The Marxist is still hugging the dead body of this negation.

Marxism claims to be scientific and intellectually self-consistent and it also presumes to have repudiated all faith in any supersensible reality. Over against its own presumably scientific outlook it decries all religion and idealism as based on unproved and unprovable dogmas. But it forgets that the nature of ultimate reality is never logically or experimentally demonstrable. Every view of existence rests ultimately on faith of one kind or another. Materialism as well as idealism, theism as well as atheism, rests on faith. Existence, empirically, presents the human mind with a variety of experiences. Human experience is sometimes physical and at other times mental, moral or aesthetic. Man encounters order as well as disorder. Man experiences determinism or necessity but has at the same time an ineradicable intuition of freedom or the capacity to choose freely between alternatives of action. Man is pushed by instincts but is also pulled by ideals. At one time mere biological urges work blindly and unconsciously and at another time life itself is gladly sacrificed, not for biological but for super-biological ends. It has been rightly said that many a saint is biologically a failure. It is merely an

act of faith to choose one out of many working hypotheses and accept it provisionally as an explanation of the ultimate nature of existence. Existence presents love as well as discord and it is possible to choose one as being more fundamental than the other. Even mathematics starts with certain axioms which are accepted as *a priori* truths, which being self-evident require no proof, and are by their very nature unprovable. Axiomatic or *a priori* truths form the basis of every science; therefore it is unjustified to say that religions rest on faith and science rests on self-evident or demonstrable truths. The ultimate postulate of physical sciences is the uniformity of causation and rigid determinism. Human experience is partial and fragmentary and there is no justification for extending partial and empirical human induction to every aspect of reality as the very essence of being in all its aspects. Still physical science sticks to this faith because it works and is useful in theory and practice. But the theist asserts that the postulates of theism work even better; they do not contradict the postulates of physical causation but supplement them by more comprehensive ones which explain much that physical causation takes no account of.

Dialectical materialism is also a particular type of faith or dogma about the nature of reality and as a dogma has no inherent superiority over the faiths which it attempts to supplant. For all materialism existence is blind, though blind with an inexorable necessity and regularity; it has neither meanings nor purposes; meanings and purposes are imported into it by human needs and subjective prejudices. Mechanistic materialism recognised only mechanistic necessity; dialectical materialism has replaced it by dialectical necessity, but both types of necessities are non-purposive; according to both the universe as such has no aims and its processes have no prescribed goals. But human life is lived in a realm of nature as well as a realm of ends. If you eliminate ends and purposes and meanings from human existence it would be utterly paralysed both for understanding and action.

Even theism and many varieties of idealism would not contradict this tenet of Marxian epistemology that all ideas have a reference to action and ideas have to be tested in the physical realm by explaining physical processes and in the social realm as explanatory principles of social processes. The tree of knowledge as well as the tree of action is to be known by its fruits. Man wants to understand the nature of existence in general in order to evaluate his own actions and to formulate his own ends by knowing how he stands with respect to reality. Man is the centre of his own universe and the proper study of mankind is man. Any view of existence which does not explain human life satisfactorily would be a hindrance instead of being a help to living. Marxism has attempted to draw conclusions about human existence from its theory of being as dialectically material. The essential purpose of Marxism is neither ontological nor epistemological; its dominant aim is the explanation of human history by discovering a thread that runs through its entire warp and woof. What it claims to have discovered is the doctrine of historical materialism. But this theory satisfies neither theoretical nor practical reason and offers no explanation for man's deeper springs of action that have no reference to his material or biological needs. It may be difficult to offer satisfactory proofs about the spiritual background of the universe or to prove that human values have a divine origin and are rooted in eternity. Dialectical materialism takes the lowest aspect of existence and like all materialism makes an attempt to derive the higher from the lower. Religion or philosophical idealism, on the other hand, tries to explain the lower in terms of the higher. Dialectical materialism of Marx is a hybrid between Hegelian idealism and mechanistic materialism of the nineteenth century. It is an unprovable dogma and is accepted as a matter of faith by all Marxists as blindly and as unintelligently as any religious obscurantist ever did. It has not freed the human spirit by replacing one dogmatism by another.

Historical Materialism

WE START with a brief exposition of the doctrine before offering any criticism. Historical materialism is dialectical materialism applied to human relations within human society. Biologically, two things are vital for human existence: production and reproduction. For Marx production is more fundamental than reproduction, because reproduction or population problem depends, to a great extent, on the production of essential commodities and their mode of distribution. Production and distribution are the ultimate determinants of the pattern of social life. Instruments of production, in the primitive stage, are labour and skill. The productive forces of a particular type produce productive relations that correspond to their patterns, and change automatically and concomitantly with the changes in the productive forces. According to Marx, at a very early stage in history, certain members of society acquired a control over the productive forces and a minority began to live by the labour of the majority. Before this exploitation began, primitive society was co-operative in all its social functions; the private ownership of the means of production caused the Fall of Man. As it is against human nature to offer the fruits of one's labour willingly to another, the relation of the exploited and the exploiter must be one of antagonism. So, very early in human society, a struggle, veiled or open, started between these two classes. For Marx all human history is essentially a story of class-struggle. This struggle will continue until the classes are abolished by a proletarian revolution which will finally

establish a classless society. According to dialectical materialism, the essential thing about man is his body which is only matter organised, and man's essential needs are physical as the essential needs of any animal are physical. In order to satisfy these needs he establishes customs, makes laws and institutions, creates creeds and philosophies, preaches morals and teaches manners, and raises a superstructure of arts and sciences. The love of knowledge for its own sake, the practising of virtue as its own reward, faith, hope and charity, and all the paraphernalia of spirituality and idealism are the rationalisations or sublimations of his essential physical needs, dominated by productive forces and productive relations. He called the economic system of society substructure (*unterbau*) and religion, laws, ethics and other institutions of society as superstructure (*oberbau*). According to Marx, the close analysis of any element of the superstructure would reveal the influence of the substructure as a determining factor. Religions and morals are concocted by dominant classes to fortify their own interests; therefore all religion and ethics hitherto prevalent among mankind are suspect. The ideas of eternal truth and social justice have no place in reality; they were invented by the dominant classes to perpetuate their power. No improvement in human conditions has ever taken place because of the preachings of prophets and reformers. Unless the productive forces have undergone a substantial change, ideas of truth and justice by themselves will either not emerge at all or if they do emerge in individual minds, they will fall on barren ground. Whenever you find in history that such ideas have become effective to more or less extent, you will always discover that a radical change in environment has made it possible for them to germinate because they were themselves the products of the environment. Hegel had said something very similar about philosophy that it can never predict or create, but it is always retrospective. For Hegel, philosophy, whether applied to history or to anything else, arrived only at

the understanding of what the dialectic of history had already created. 'Philosophy comes too late to teach the world what it should be. The owl of Minerva begins its flight when the shades of twilight have already fallen.'

According to Marx, the motive force of all change is the development of contradictions in every system. From the point of view of production and distribution he divides human history into five stages: primitive communal or co-operative stage, the institution of slavery, feudalism, capitalism, socialism. In accordance with the Hegelian dialectic, which Marx follows closely in this respect, every stage is an advance on its predecessor, because every negation retains the useful values of what it negates while arriving at a synthesis of opposites. Marx appraises no stage as just or unjust; he follows Hegel here also that whatever is is right because it is a necessary phase in evolution; the elimination of any single phase would have hindered the appearance of the next higher stage. The revolutionary struggle of Marx was directed against capitalism but the achievements of capitalism have never received better encomiums at the hands of any protagonist of capitalism than those bestowed on it by Marx. But he believed firmly that the time of its negation had come and it has already outlived its usefulness; it is always bad to outstay one's welcome. In this respect he anticipated the utterance of Tennyson (minus the name of God, which he would have replaced with dialectic), that 'Old order changeth, yielding place to new and God fulfils Himself in many ways, lest one good custom should corrupt the world'.

The Marxists have unduly simplified all human history by finding in it only one type of efficient causation. Others may talk of revolutions created by ideological changes, the rise of Christianity, the advent of Islam, Renaissance or Reformation; but for the Marxists all these explanations are illusory. According to them, such explanations commit the fallacy of *hysteron proteron*, putting the carts of ideas before the horses of productive relations. They have attempted to reinterpret all history

from this angle. An Indian Communist, M.N. Roy, published a brochure on Islam explaining from the economic point of view all that was hitherto explained ideologically. Paying a tribute to the intellectual genius of Marx, Engels said at the graveside of his great collaborator that Marx had done for social sciences what Darwin had done in the field of natural science. Just as Darwin discovered the law of evolution in organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of evolution in human history; he discovered the simple fact, hitherto concealed by an overgrowth of ideology, that mankind must first of all eat and drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, religion, science, etc.; and therefore the production of the immediate material needs of subsistence, and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given period, form the foundation upon which State institutions, legal conceptions, art and even religious ideas of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which these things must be explained, instead of *vice versa* as had hitherto been the case.

Engels credited Marx with a revolutionary discovery, and this revolutionary discovery consists of finding that economic causes have always been fundamental and that the unfolding of human history everywhere in every country and in every epoch has followed the dialectical principle. It is difficult to credit Marx with the originality of the idea that economic relations play a very fundamental role in human relations. The originality lies only in the undue emphasis that Marx laid on this factor. Marx is often quoted for the 'great idea' that man has to live and eat before he can create art or literature or philosophy. Has any sane man ever denied this? One could proceed further on the same line and say that a man has to breathe before he can start eating anything, and therefore all human activity must be explained from the point of view of breathing. As a matter of fact, some systems of physical, mental and spiritual discipline promulgated by the ancient Indian sages concentrated great attention

on the process of respiration and developed it into a science and an art. The most fundamental thing for a living being is to be born and then follows breathing, eating and procreation. The fault of Marx does not lie in pointing to the importance of the means of living, or that man has to produce the essential commodities of life before he can take to mental construction or aesthetic creation or appreciation. Marx did not realise that human life is hierarchical; man is at the same time matter, life, mind and spirit. Every higher stage presumes and is based upon a particular development of the lower stage. There could be no life without matter, but this does not prove that life essentially is matter and follows the laws of matter. Materialism of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries made desperate attempts to explain life in terms of naturalistic mechanism, but the attempts failed utterly. There is a fundamental difference between life as such and matter as such although life has necessarily a material substratum without which it cannot exist. Matter is blindly mechanistic and life is a goal-seeking activity even in the amoeba. The laws of organic life are not the laws of matter. In the course of evolution life develops mind and consciousness and this new phase develops its own mode of operation subject to distinctive laws. As life cannot exist without matter, mind cannot exist or work without being embodied. Religious consciousness is concerned with a still higher phase which works on and through mental processes but is a thing *sui generis*. To those who have no experience of it, it is difficult to prove that the spirit works according to laws that are different from the laws that govern psychological processes at the perceptual or the intellectual level. Two or more centuries of the development of physical sciences convinced man of the reality of matter as the ultimate principle of all existence and led to the genetic view that whatever has emerged chronologically later must be explained in terms of causes that have preceded in time. According to this view, if flowers grow out of mud or manure they are essentially mud or manure.

This mode of thought which was predominant in the nineteenth century affected Marx and Engels as well. Having discovered the importance of economic production and distribution and having seen that man generally is dominated by his physical needs they began to preach the doctrine that as these needs form the substratum of a good deal of human activity they are the essential basis of human life; all the rest is reflection of these needs. Religion, ethics, art and literature are secondary factors not governed by laws of their own but as camp-followers of production and distribution of commodities.

The main defect in the doctrine of historical materialism lies in its belief that there is only one-way traffic between the economic and other cultural factors like philosophy and art, religion and ethics. Material needs act as efficient causes and the cultural superstructures are direct or indirect effects. The real and obviously experienced fact is that although in the hierarchy of human existence there are higher and lower stages or aspects, there is always an interaction between the higher and the lower. Life is more than mere matter but is affected by changes in matter which is organised as a body. The interaction of life and matter within an organism is not a matter of theory but a constant and incontrovertible life-experience. Life in the body is modified by the food that it assimilates. Similarly, changes in climate which are purely material affect life beneficially or adversely. But if life is influenced by matter within and without the body, it also changes matter both within and without. Organic as well as inorganic matter is metamorphosed by the contingencies of life. There is a similar interaction between mind and life in the body. Physiological conditions have an indubitable effect on a person's ideas, feelings, emotions and volitions. But here again there is a two-way traffic and interaction. Good or bad tidings immediately have an effect on the entire nervous and glandular system. It would be the denial of obvious facts to say that all that happens to man happens because of his bodily changes. Climate too affects the lives of

individuals and nations in various ways. Raw materials and other commodities, manufacture and commerce, arts and crafts assume particular shapes directly or indirectly through the effects of climate; also the geographical position of a country determines to a great extent the history of that country. But it is a fact that different varieties of civilisation have been created in very similar climates because of the presence of other factors.

Historical materialism is the result of over-simplification of human motives and human history. It got hold of only a fragment of truth and tried to convince humanity that it was the whole truth or the fundamental truth, to which every other aspect of life must be subordinated. It is a fact that within every human society there is always present a covert or overt conflict of opposing tendencies. Within the compass of a nation there are professional groups with special interests, religious groups with more or less divergent views of life here or hereafter, clannish or racial groups with special affinities, and in a politically advanced nation there are a number of political parties. Marxism simplifies the whole human situation by declaring that only two human classes exist, the exploiters and the exploited, the haves and the have-nots, and it is the conflict between these classes which creates and explains all history. Human motivation is not so simple.

If we take a realistic view of history, we shall have to admit that different epochs and different human groups have been actuated by a variety of motives. Take, for instance, the religious motive. Religion is considered by the Marxists to be a reflection of economic motives and economic conflicts, but if we read the bloody history of religious conflicts, particularly in the West where during the religious ages even trivial differences of creeds generated the most violent emotions, we notice that people belonging to a creed consisted of all sorts of economic classes, and animated by a single ruling passion staked their all to uphold an article of faith which had not the remotest connections with man's material or economic

interests. Let me give a quotation from Joad (*The Book-mark*, p. 110):

It is estimated that competition between rival religions has been responsible for more wars than any other single cause, and of these, the most numerous and the fiercest have been waged between sects representing different versions of the religion of peace. Men have fought to maintain their right to turn to the East during the recital of the Apostles' Creed and have died in thousands over the question of whether the words 'and the son' should or should not be inserted in the Nicene Creed. Unless, therefore, we are to suppose that the scope of the economic motive is to be extended to cover the expectation of pecuniary benefits in the next world, as well as in this one, the Marxian analysis of the causes of what are called religious wars breaks down. Personally, I think, it is doubtful whether Marx would have consented to any such extension; he did not believe in heaven, which he considered a bourgeois invention.

Besides the religious conflicts, human society has suffered from countless dynastic wars and wars waged by military adventurers motivated by the instincts of glory and self-aggrandizement. Some of these wars changed the economic and cultural settings of large tracts of the earth, but economic changes or changes in the modes of production and distribution were not necessarily either the causes or the effects of these large upheavals. The fact is that all attempts to interpret human history through any single law have been unsuccessful. It is an ineradicable, intellectual trend to reduce the diversity of phenomena to the uniformity of one type of causation. All science and all intellectual achievements are the fulfilment of this desire. During the centuries of scientific progress great successes were achieved progressively in the understanding of physical phenomena. Even the working of organic life below man was brought within the framework of certain uniformly operating laws. But life as it ascends higher and higher becomes less and less predictable not because it is not subject to the operation of laws but the factors that operate become increasingly complex and any satisfactory understanding becomes so difficult that a stark realist has to concede a large field of operation to what appears to be mere chance directing a good portion of

history into unforeseeable channels. Bertrand Russell, who is one of the leading scientific thinkers of modern times, despairs of finding any laws that govern historical events. Fortuitous events seem to have a decisive influence. He says it was touch-and-go whether the German government allowed Lenin to return to Russia in 1917. If he had not been allowed to go to Russia it is difficult to believe that the Russian revolution would have taken the course it did. Again, if Genoa had not ceded Corsica to France in 1768, Napoleon, born there in the following year, would have been an Italian and would have had no career in France. Napoleon's birth a year or two this way or that way is a mere accident, but did not this accident change the history of France and of Europe? Carew Hunt writes in his criticism of Marxist interpretation of history that it cannot explain why the Christian religion was independently accepted by races as different as the civilised Romans and the semi-barbarous Slavs and Irish. Nor, incidentally, does it explain why totally different ideologies should be held by men who share the same cultural background, so that the founders of Socialism, including Marx and Engels themselves, and most of the leaders of the nineteenth-century labour movement, should have belonged to the bourgeoisie. He says that the relation between the economic substructure and superstructure resembles that between the soil of a field and the plants growing in it. We know that the plants sprang from the soil, and that if there were no soil there would be no plants; but we do not know who sowed the seeds, or where they came from, or why those plants grow there and no other (Carew Hunt, *Theory and Practice of Communism*, p. 46).

So obsessed are the Marxists about viewing economic relations as the sole determinants of human history in every direction that they deny categorically the role of great men as shapers of human destiny. They assert that French or European history would have taken the same course, with or without Napoleon, or if Bonaparte had not sprung up from somewhere, someone else was

dialectically bound to do the same job. Similarly, the advent of Christ has, for them, either no meaning or that he preached the Sermon on the Mount to comfort the have-nots by promising heavenly bliss in the Kingdom of Heaven for the oppressed and the exploited and refusal of entry to the exploiting rich. But if religion is a dope or opium of the people and it was invented by the exploiting class as a method of ensuring the subservience of the exploited, how would they explain the fact that Christ was neither a landlord nor a slave-owner nor a capitalist? He was a poor carpenter not quite sure of his daily bread. If they find it difficult to explain it they might try to seek assistance from Nietzsche who dubbed Christianity as a slave conspiracy and slave revolt to weaken the power of the exploiters by making them weak and degenerate like themselves, or having once captured power to turn the tables on them. As already stated, Islam too is explained away by the Marxists as an economic phenomenon. Islam caused one of the greatest revolutions in history. It was not the outburst of barbaric nomadic hordes like Chingiz Khan's Tartars or Scythians or Huns. It effected an all-round revolution in the lives of its adherents and transformed the moral and economic life of people in all grades of civilisation. Marxists say that all great revolutions emanate from fundamental changes in the modes of production and distribution. When Muhammad rose and cried in the name of the Creator of the universe and of humanity to recast their lives according to a superior ideology which should free man from the superstitious worship of gods and idols and to end the domination of man over man either in the shape of worship or economic exploitation or priestly privileges, did his world-transforming emotion originate in any fundamental changes in the modes of production or distribution in the desert of the Hejaz? During the time of the Prophet, Hejaz had been living according to an economic pattern for millenniums. This stereotyped pattern was accepted by all classes or, to speak more correctly, by communities and tribes that lived a life of

primitive democracy. Who wanted the change that Muhammad desired to bring about? Obviously no tribe and no class, because Arabian society was almost a classless society. Among the few scattered towns and tribes of the desert none had any sympathy for his mission; no one demanded any change. When he rose to proclaim his creed he was thwarted, denounced and persecuted by the haves and the have-nots alike. Individuals of every mode of life, the nomad, the merchant, the tiller of the soil and the banker, everyone feared his creed as the disturber and destroyer of the time-honoured social, religious and economic order. When by dint of his faith he began to get followers, these followers came from all classes; rich merchants as well as slaves were ranged on either side. Only an imaginary or distorted study of history would read into this great revolution the outcome of class-conflicts. It is ridiculous to assert that dialectical or historical materialism produced a Muhammad and the Prophet was the mouthpiece of economic class-conflicts. Arabia had remained unchanged for millenniums and would have continued indefinitely in its ancient ways if a man of the genius of the Prophet had not canalised the energies of the people into entirely new channels. After Islam the Arabs dominated a large portion of the civilized world morally and culturally for centuries and Islam is still a living force moulding the lives of countless millions. If creeds are made by exploiters and for exploiters, and imposed by force or cunning on the exploited, could it be justifiably asserted by any historian that the Prophet belonged to the exploiting class and directly or indirectly served the interests of that class.

Muhammad found a good deal of exploitation and economic injustice about him and tried to remedy them radically; but it was ideology acting on economics and not changes in production or modes of exchange and distribution creating an ideology, as a rationalization or justification. I think the advent of Islam, with its repudiation of tribal, racial or national feelings of superiority or inferiority, preached by a man not remotely

actuated by feelings of any economic class-conflict, stands in history as a convincing refutation of historical materialism. There is no doubt that ethics and religion have very often been used in human history to maintain the *status quo* that suited the ruling or the wealthy classes; Machiavelli recommended that they should be used as such, and Napoleon in his field library classified books on religion under the heading of Politics. The non-religious Gibbon has also pronounced his view of religion that it is necessary for the masses and useful for the politician. Thrasymachus in Plato's *Republic* and in modern times Nietzsche's attitude towards morals and religion have much in common with Marxism. It is an historical certainty that many human societies and States have been based on force, and morals and laws have been promulgated that served the interests of the ruling and exploiting classes, but to say that virtue and truth never have had any basis apart from economic causes and physical urges is an assertion belied by human nature and human history. The Holy Qur'an has put it well: 'Good and bad are not alike though you may find the abundance of the bad astonishing' (v. 100).

To attempt to explain all human values as by-products or reflections of physical needs is on a par with the hedonistic effort to resolve all human motivation to a search for pleasure. Modern psychology, taking a more realistic view of human nature, has completely repudiated hedonism in all its varieties. Now it is generally acknowledged that pleasure is a by-product of the satisfaction of human ends which are not determined by the calculation of pleasure and pain. Engels had become aware of this extremely untenable position. In a letter to Joseph Bloch (21 September 1890, *Correspondence*, pp. 475-6) he tried to wriggle out of it, but with what success, may be judged by the reader. He says:

According to the materialist conception of history, the determining element is ultimately the production and reproduction in real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. If, therefore, somebody twists this into the statement that the economic element is

the only determining element, he transforms it into a meaningless, abstract and absurd phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure also exercise their influence upon the historical struggle and in many cases preponderate in determining their form. There is an interaction of all these elements, in which amid all the endless hosts of accidents the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary. Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that younger writers sometimes lay more stress on the economic factor than is due to it. We had to emphasise this main principle in opposition to our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into their rights.

Engels has here made a hesitating attempt to reconcile the fundamental doctrine of historical materialism with the irrefutable criticism of its opponents. He asserts in one breath that ultimately production and reproduction are the determining elements and then accuses the younger Marxists along with himself and Marx for having placed an undue stress on the economic factor alone. How could Marx and Engels deny the power of ideas and moral idealism over and above the economic factors? They were themselves moralists in spite of themselves, for it was really a passion for social justice which actuated them to create an ideology and inculcate it among the workers. If the economic factors move with their own dialectic, where is the necessity of crying to the proletariat of the world to unite? Here the causation of the forces seems to be inverted; the superstructure which is no more than a reflection is making desperate attempts to alter the foundational substructure. It happened to Marxism what happened to their contemporaneous hedonism, which had started as its basic principle that pleasure is the only motive and ought to be the only motive of human action, but John Stuart Mill acknowledges in his book on Utilitarianism that pleasures differ not only in quantity but also in quality, conceding thereby that there are values other than pleasure by which pleasures should be evaluated as higher and lower. Starting to defend hedonism, he ends by saying that it is better to be a man dissatisfied than

to be a 'pig satisfied'. But that is the essence of all ethics and spirituality preached and practised from time immemorial. It is to be noted in the letter of Engels quoted above that although he has been constrained to acknowledge the motivation of the cultural superstructure he has not accepted the possibility of its promulgating any values other than or higher than the satisfaction of material needs. The Marxists have never realised the truth with sufficient clarity that man does not live by bread alone and his ultimate destiny is to make himself materially and physically secure not as an end in itself but to make himself free for the realisation of certain intrinsic values of truth, beauty, goodness and love which are human as well as divine. These values are manifested and unfolded in the physical and the biological realms but their significance is cosmic. Finite human existence has to be a progressive realisation of divine values.

The total urge of life has developed a number of instincts to be used as instruments. Life makes use of love of power for its enrichment and the instinct of sex for reproduction. Two Jewish thinkers, Marx and Freud, fixed their gaze on two separate instincts; one took hold of production and the other of reproduction. Considering each instrument as an end in itself, one conceived of production and distribution of commodities as the chief driving force of human existence and the other equated the life-urge with libido, which is fundamentally the sex-urge. Both of them were so taken up with the originality of their discoveries that each of them was convinced of having discovered a secret that would unravel all the unsolved mysteries of human existence. The pan-economism of one and the pan-sexualism of the other were accepted as true creeds by large portions of humanity in the West after the gradual eclipse of their traditional faiths. These creeds were proclaimed to be scientific while all other religions were stigmatised as dogmatic and unscientific. It would be unfair to deny the contributions to human knowledge that have been made by both. Marx has made the social scientists realise the

immense importance of the economic factor in human history and the cultural life of man. Similarly, Freud has pointed out with an unprecedented acumen the ubiquitous working of sex even in spheres which seemed to be immune from it. But both of them having emphasised important truths spoilt the value of their contributions by presenting themselves as monopolists of ultimate reality. Marx who waged a war against all monopolies became himself a monopolist of truth. His followers tried to out-Marx Marx himself in this respect as has been acknowledged by Engels in the letter quoted above and as was evidenced by the exasperation of Marx in his discussion with some exuberant young followers when he had to exclaim: 'Please note that I am Karl Marx and not a Marxist'. Marxists and Freudeans are now suffering from different manias. For the Marxists all pre-Marxian literature, philosophy, art, architecture, poetry, morality and religion have become nothing but reflections of feudal or bourgeois exploitation. Every poem and every picture and the life of every saint and prophet is to be interpreted in the light of historical materialism. Such attempts, very ingenious in some cases, become very often ridiculous in their far-fetchedness. Not only all philosophical systems but all scientific theories are sought to be related to the economic background. One Marxist has maintained that Newton's intuition about gravitation can be explained with reference to the economics of his age. It is difficult to guess as to how he would do it; perhaps somewhat like this: all material bodies exercise a pull on all other material bodies as every human being is trying to draw towards himself as much money or commodities as he can, but ultimately the larger body succeeds in pulling to itself the smaller bodies, as the capitalist accumulating the instruments of production is able to make the smaller capitalist and the wage-earner fall to his knees. A hungry man is said to have been asked the sum of two plus two and he replied it was four loaves of bread. This is exactly what has happened to Marxism. All human endeavour and all

human aspiration are by an ingenious twist related to production and exchange as effects of economic causes. The Freudeans are stricken with a similar madness in their own sphere. They look at architecture from pyramids to Gothic cathedrals and Renaissance monuments to find in them embodiments of sex symbolism. They find in the minarets and domes direct representations of phallic symbols and female breasts. Some of them have seriously studied Euclid from this point of view. It would be interesting to make the followers of these two Jewish pseudo-prophets confront one another, one explaining every human phase by production and the other by reproduction. All this ridiculous procedure follows from the error of making a partial truth masquerade as the whole truth. Life is either a harmony or a conflict of many instincts and there is an intricate permutation and combination of human motives. Attempts to explain kaleidoscopic human life with the help of one instinct or one motive and to make one passion the ruling passion of all individuals and all communities in all epochs is bound to end in failure as an explanation of life. Some protagonists of Marxian socialism have presented their view of historical materialism in a comparatively sober form. Paul M. Sweezy presents it as follows:

The first principle of historical materialism is that the way people think is determined by the way they live. This principle has often been wrongly interpreted to mean that intellectual activity plays only a passive role in the historical process. What it does mean is something quite different—that intellectual activity influences the course of history primarily through its impact on the way people live. But intellectual activity does not take place in a vacuum; it grows out of past and present experiences. Hence, though intellectual activity is a vital link in the chain of historical causation, it cannot be said to be an independent variable, as the various idealist and psychological schools of historical interpretation assume. The role attributed to intellectual activity in historical materialism has probably been the source of more misunderstandings and misrepresentations than any other aspect of the doctrine (*Socialism*, pp. 119-20).

Further on he says that it is obviously impossible to

analyse society without adopting some system of classifying people into groups. Many modern historians assume that nationality is the most important criterion; others assign a similar role to religion. Historical materialism does not deny the relevance of these criteria to many problems but it asserts that more fundamental than either is the division of society into social classes (p. 121).

If the doctrine of historical materialism is stated in this broad manner, a liberal thinker would agree with it to some extent. If it is only one way of classifying human groups and other ways of classifying humanity and interpreting human history are also considered valid, there would be little occasion to reject it out of hand. Any student of history knows how potent religion has been both for good and for evil and one sees in very advanced societies even to-day that many a fierce conflict is nothing but racial conflict. Note the Negro problem in the United States and the colour problem in South Africa. Religious divisions even in the modern world are still creating revolutions and making history irrespective of the class-divisions of the opponents. Nationalism in the form of Nazism and Fascism caused catastrophic upheavals. It is impossible to resolve these racial, national and religious conflicts into class-conflicts. Human societies form collective egos on a variety of psychological foundations. All so-called bourgeoisie is not constituted of one class with one interest—the interests of different sections of the bourgeoisie conflict with one another—nor have the industrial workers and peasants always identical interests. In any developed civilisation a larger number of ideas and ideals, motives and interests create mutual stresses and strains. The historical materialist says that what people think depends on how they live, and how they live depends on how they make their living, but is not the reverse also true that how people live depends on how they make their view of life which they may have accepted from the teaching of religious teachers or moral reformers?

The assertion of the Marxists that every event has to be

understood with reference to the setting in which it takes place is not only true but almost a truism; nothing originates or develops in a vacuum; ideas and actions reflect each other and interact to a greater or lesser extent. It is true about the universe in which we live that it is a unity of multiplicity; it is a universe and not a multiverse. As Carlyle said, the entire universe co-operates to make a blade of grass grow, and Tennyson addressing the flower in the crannied wall is sure that if he knew it all in all he would know what God and man is. As human organism is much more complex in its unified diversities, so is a highly developed human society. The shape and function of every organ and every cell is co-ordinated directly or indirectly with other organs and other cells. Wherever there is complex life there is constant action and interaction. The mistake of historical materialism does not lie in finding interconnections between economic and non-economic factors but in making the economic factors as the most vital, the essential and the primary motive force of all human existence. If there were a dispute about the human body as to what is the most vital part or which is the most vital function, you could have a number of schools, each one the protagonist of some one organ or function as primary and fundamental and all others as subsidiary. The primitive man thought of life or soul as breath to which philology bears testimony, because in a number of ancient languages the same word means soul as well as breath. Breathing stopped for a few minutes puts an end to life; could not one say legitimately that breathing is essential and fundamental and everything else is secondary? Similarly, we find the ancient belief that life resides in the blood and the heart-beat; they thought that it was obvious because when the heart stops, life is extinguished. Is the liver less important? Is there not a great truth in the answer given by a person as to whether life is worth living that it depends on the liver? The stomach, the biochemical laboratory and the power-house of the whole organism—does it not occupy a central place in the body in every respect? A Persian poet

prayed to God; 'O Lord! make not my stomach angry with me, I don't care who else becomes my enemy'. Tennyson while walking with a friend met the famous author and freethinker Edward Carpenter on the way and parted after a light chat. The companion of Tennyson remarked with derision that Carpenter was an atheist, to which Tennyson rejoined jocosely that he himself could afford to be an atheist if he had the stomach of Edward Carpenter who was hale, hearty and buxom because he could eat copiously and digest it properly. Tennyson was a theist, an idealist and a spiritualist with the touch of a mystic in him but he knew very well that the condition of the body reacted even on the beliefs of men. All the same, knowing the interaction of body and mind full well he would not have agreed with Feuerbach that man is what he eats, or that faith is only a by-product of gastric processes.

Historical materialism picked up only material causes of production and exchange and tried to explain the working of every organ of the social organism in accordance with these causes. This is exactly the mistake committed by the medical profession that considered human bodies as subject to physical causation only. Since the rapid development of medical psychology and psychosomatic medicine it has been proved beyond any shadow of doubt that many a disease, hitherto diagnosed as functional or organic, was really caused by psychological aberrations and conflicts screened by the subconscious regions of the mind; wrong mental attitudes and emotional upsets had disturbed the equilibrium of life. Could not we develop a sociopathology on the same lines? The historical materialist will fail to cure the social organism of humanity if he sticks to the prejudice that the ills of humanity are due only to economic causes or subsidiary motives emanating from economic foundations. No materialist ever points out to distorted moral or spiritual attitudes as possible causes of human misery; he is shy of using ethical or psychological terminology, for fear of falling into idealism which for him is a mortal sin.

Hitler banned psychoanalysis in Nazi Germany perhaps fearing unconsciously to be himself diagnosed as a neurotic, which he unmistakably was. I doubt whether they allow it in Soviet Russia because there too preoccupation with the soul of man ought to be anathema. In this respect even Greeks in the time of Plato appear to have been much wiser. Plato was fond of the analogy between the individual and the State saying that the State is only the individual writ large. What he wrote more than three hundred years before Christ in his dialogue, *Charmides*, may therefore be held as true both about the individual and the State. A part of the dialogue is worth quoting verbatim:

I dare say that you have heard eminent physicians say to a patient who comes to them with bad eyes, that they cannot cure his eyes by themselves, but that if his eyes are to be cured, his head must be treated; and then again they say that to think of curing the head alone and not the rest of the body also, is the height of folly. And arguing in this way, they apply their methods to the whole body and try to treat and heal the whole and the part together.

Did you ever observe that this is what they say?’

‘Yes,’ he said.

‘And they are right and you would agree with them?’

‘Yes,’ he said, ‘certainly, I should.’

His approving answers reassured me and I began by degrees to regain confidence, and the vital heat returned.

‘Such, Charmides,’ I said, ‘is the nature of the charm which I learned when serving with the army from one of the physicians of the Thracian King Zamolxis, who are said to be so skilful that they can even give immortality. This Thracian told me that in these notions of theirs, which I was just now mentioning, the Greek physicians are quite right as far as they go; but Zamolxis, he added, our King who is also a god says further, that as you ought not to attempt to cure the eyes without the head, or the head without the body, so neither ought you to attempt to cure the body without the soul; and this, he said, is the reason why the cure of many diseases is unknown to the physicians of Hellas, because they are ignorant of the whole, which ought to be studied also; for the part can never be well unless the whole is well. For all good or evil, whether in the body or in human nature, originates, as he declared, in the soul, and overflows from thence, as if from the head into the eyes. And therefore if the head and the body are to be well, you must begin by curing the soul; that is the first

thing. And the cure, my dear youth, has to be effected by the use of certain charms, and these charms are fair words; and by them temperance is implanted in the soul, and where temperance is, there health is speedily imparted, not only to the head but to the whole body. And he who taught me the cure and the charm at the same time added a special direction: "Let no one," he said, "persuade you to cure the head until he has first given you the soul to be cured by the charm." For this, he said, is the great error of our day in the treatment of the human body, that the physicians separate the soul from the body' (*Charmides*, Steph. 156, 157, Jowett's translation).

There is a Persian saying that a half-physician is danger to life and it is better for a patient to go without a cure and entrust himself to the healing power of Mother Nature than to place himself in the hands of a half-physician or a quack. The dominant trend during the last two centuries in the West has been materialistic considering matter to be the whole of existence and the mathematico-mechanistic approach to it to be the only feasible approach that produces results. Man, according to it, is nothing more than his body which is a highly organised system of matter. This approach created what Sorokin, Professor of Sociology at Harvard, calls Sensate Civilisation. Marxism is nothing but the climax of this development, a vigorous and militant declaration of the denial of all supersensible aspects of reality. Human history was declared as nothing more than a play of material factors. This trend is a reaction against empty transcendentalism which relegated to oblivion the physical aspects of man, and the material aspects of existence. Ascetic religions inculcated the nurture of the soul at the cost of the body and philosophical idealism gave a purely intellectualistic explanation of all reality. It cannot be denied that Marxian materialism has done some service in bringing man down to the earth. It has made thinkers and reformers realise the importance of factors that they had reflected, but its exaggerations and half-truths have become dangerous for the total welfare of man. The Qur'an declares man to be the lord of the earth with powers delegated by the Lord of the universe. He has to regulate life on the earth in order to be equipped

to be a denizen of heaven. Earth alone ought not to engross the whole of his life. Human history cannot be explained by merely biological or economic forces although those forces play a very important part.

Islamic Theism versus Dialectical Materialism

THE Communists base their ideology on a concept of the nature of existence. Their ideology, as already stated, is initially borrowed from Hegel but considerably modified in its implications and applications. Hegel's philosophy was based on absolutism and dynamism. His attempt to combine these opposites led him into strange artificialities and obscurities. The absolute does not and cannot exist in its absoluteness; it is an eternally static reality as an idea but it is at the same time identical with the dialectical process in which every step posits and negates itself to move on to the synthesis of opposites which again begins to be negated as soon as it is affected. One may say that the absolute idea exists only in process, as the law and goal of all change. Consciousness or self-consciousness is not its essential or eternal attribute; it attained to self-consciousness only when after a long process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis it reached the stage of Hegelian philosophy. Hegel's absolute is knowledge and reality at the same time. He is called an idealist because he called his absolute the idea, but if by idealism one understands the priority of mind over matter the term would not apply to Hegelianism. For Hegel mind as well as matter are only phases in the dialectical process which emerge at different stages. None of the two is fundamental or primary, though one may have dialectical or chronological priority. Hegel saw that ultimate reality is the absolute idea, which is not the idea of an absolute mind. Although in many ways diametrically opposed to Plato, in

considering the idea as self-subsistent, Hegel reveals an agreement with Plato. But Plato had not been able to explain satisfactorily how the absolutely static is related to the dynamism of existence; for him change had become unreal, and the relation of becoming to being remained an unsolved mystery. Hegel thought he had remedied the deficiency of Platonism by identifying the absolute idea with the logic of perpetual changes.

Marx took from Hegel the logic of dynamism that it proceeds by the creation and reconciliation of opposites. But what is it that proceeds in this manner? Marx picked up matter which was only one phase of the dialectical process and put it in the place of Hegel's absolute idea as ultimate reality. Matter, however, is a very vague concept which has been constantly changing its connotation from one thinker to another. Early Greek thought had as yet not distinguished matter from life and mind; their concept of reality was hylozoistic. Whatever ultimate reality was conceived to be, whether water, air, or fire, it had material, vital, mental and even moral attributes. Later on, these concepts began to be idealised more and more. For the Pythagoreans matter was nothing but the visible symbol of mathematics. For Plato and Aristotle ultimate reality is reason and matter is that aspect of existence which is not yet rationalised and is hence equivalent to non-being which is mere potentiality or capacity to reflect being. For Democritus matter consisted of an infinite number of indivisible atoms which by their fortuitous concourse make or unmake the shape of things. In Neoplatonism matter became equivalent to darkness or infinite remoteness from the absolute which was likened to a source of light. Being is hierarchical and graded, and matter, is the uttermost degradation of being which may be identified with non-being and as such is devoid of all ideas and values.

From the seventeenth century onwards there was a progressive development of the concept of matter as mechanism subject to the laws of thermodynamics. A distinction was made between mass and energy and all

processes in the physical universe were explained according to the laws governing mass and energy. Extension was conceived as the chief characteristic of matter which meant the quality of occupying space. Newton gave inertia as its basic attribute. In recent times the concepts of matter that had held the ground for about two centuries underwent a revolutionary change. The distinction between mass and energy has been almost abolished or, one might say, matter has become immaterial energy. The old hypotheses of conservation of matter and conservation of energy have been given up. Matter now consists of both waves and particles for which a new term, wavicle, has been coined. Having been deprived of all primary and secondary qualities it has been reduced to mathematical relativities.

The concept of blind but mathematical mechanism was prevalent in the time of Marx who was not interested either in science or in philosophy, as merely intellectual pursuits. He was by temperament a practical man and a revolutionary; as he said himself: 'Others have been trying to understand the world, but the problem is how to change it'. The concept of matter as blind mechanism subject only to the unchanging laws of mathematics had therefore no use for a person like Marx. What shall he do with mere mechanism or agnosticism of the type of Spencer and others making the ultimate reality of both matter and mind unknowable? He found the state of things around him socially and politically intolerable. He came to the conclusion that the chief cause of the degradation of a large part of humanity lies in the ways of production and distribution of the material commodities that man needs for his existence. Mental, moral or religious attitudes are only by-products; they neither create nor change anything. Man's life is lived in a material world which he shapes by his labours according to his physical needs. If mind, ideas or ideals are not primary realities, what was left he could only call matter. He was not interested philosophically or scientifically in the intrinsic nature of matter. Matter, for him, represented

only demands and the satisfaction of demands, or, in other words, stimulus and response. He thought: what need have I to think of existence, except as it affects me. What stimuli demand from us and what response we make for the purposes of our physical existence are the only basic facts with which we are concerned. As he wanted to bring about material changes in human life and found that the matter of mechanists or agnostics was either non-purposive or utterly blank, he was driven to infuse a purpose in this reality. Here the Hegelian dialectic came to his rescue. He wanted a change through conflict and Hegel told him that existence is nothing but change through the clash of opposites. But mere conflicts and clashes are of no avail, if they do not create or advance values. Hegel told him that every synthesis of opposites not only preserves but advances the values that were contained partially in the contradictory terms. Life is a battlefield in which every victory is a step forward. Matter, though unconscious and unpurposive, somehow possesses the attribute of progressively enhancing the values of life. Now the matter of Hegel which was value-creating, value-preserving and value-enhancing was not the matter of his contemporary materialists nor the matter of any of his predecessors. The dialectical materialism of Marx is not the product of a free intellectual inquiry; he invented it as an intellectual instrument to serve the purpose of changes that he wished to bring about. He said that all philosophies are the reflections of the economic situations; his own philosophy is the best example of his thesis. He took from materialism what suited his purpose and then modified it to conceive matter pragmatically as a system of stimuli and responses or demands and reactions and then tacked on to it something as alien as the dialectic of Hegel, merely because it justified change and struggle and development through conflict. No one should seek any intellectual consistency or congruity in this practical eclecticism.

ISLAMIC THEISM

As all metaphysics consists of attempts to form concepts of the nature of existence, so too all higher religions are based on beliefs about the nature of ultimate reality. The religious approach is different from the intellectual approach because religious beliefs are not formed out of mere ratiocination. Islam, as a theistic religion, inculcates belief in revelation which means that it acknowledges supra-sensible and supra-rational sources of knowledge. These sources of knowledge may reveal realities which are other than those to which the senses and reason have access. It is beyond the scope of this book to discuss the nature or validity of knowledge or other dimensions of knowledge or being thus opened up to human consciousness. We will describe briefly the nature of being as it is revealed to a prophet who believes in God. It is one of the basic beliefs of Islam that God has revealed Himself to a countless number of prophets and saints, and their experiences, though varying to some extent according to the exigencies of times and temperaments, have been fundamentally the same. The Qur'an is an authentic record of truths as they were revealed to the Prophet of Islam.

Beliefs about ultimate reality are never completely demonstrable. Arguments can be pitched against arguments. Even if one takes religious beliefs as hypotheses or speculations about the nature of existence, it is feasible to compare these hypotheses with those that are the products of philosophical reasoning or speculation. Marx put forth a hypothesis about the nature of existence which his followers take as reality revealing its own nature finally to a gifted man. It is claimed that this hypothesis reveals the nature of reality as no other religion or speculation ever did. The theist, on the contrary, has a firm conviction that the nature of ultimate reality which he calls God may not be conclusively demonstrable, but, pitched against other hypotheses, it is comparatively a more satisfactory explanation of the universe or human existence.

Like all other theistic religions, Islam too comes forward with a hypothesis about the nature of ultimate reality and man's relations with it. For those who believe in Islam, this hypothesis no longer remains in the region of probability, but represents absolute certainty. A non-Muslim, however, can judge and verify it by rational arguments and personal or historical experience. The Qur'an claims no originality in respect of the theistic belief it puts forward. It does not offer its revelation as something hitherto unheard of by humanity. It repeats the stories of the spiritual leaders of mankind to prove the identity of the great truth they preached and practised. It says that the first being to become man was also the first harbinger of the revelation that the universe has a purpose and a spiritual source which creates and sustains it. At the ground of this infinite diversity and apparent confusion there is a fundamental unity which is conscious, purposive, value-creating and value-preserving. This unity called Allah is conscious reason, a goal-setting and goal-seeking will and infinite love. The Qur'an says that this is the truth revealed to man throughout the ages to all people through the prophets. Man was repeatedly taught and he repeatedly forgot this basic truth. Abraham and Noah, Moses and Jesus—all taught the same truth; the fundamental attribute of truth is its universality; it is self-existent and immutable beyond time and space. In the Islamic teachings certain corollaries follow from the unity of God, which philosophically speaking is the unity of reality. Islam is basically a unitarian creed which is interpreted as a belief in universal harmony. If the Creator is one, his creation, the universe, is also one; in spite of its infinite multiplicity it is not a multiverse. There is incessant change but the law of all change is unchanging. The laws of existence are called the ways of Allah or His invariable modes of action.

(Such have been) the ways of Allah with respect to those who have gone before; and you shall not find any change in the ways of Allah (xxxiii. 62).

This is the fundamental Islamic trend in the interpretation of existence. In the modes of reality there is no arbitrariness; the universe is not governed by the whims and biases of a multiplicity of gods or the caprice of natural forces. As the Qur'an says, if there were more gods than one, you would find clash and confusion in existence.

If there had been in them any gods except Allah, they would have certainly been in a state of disorder (xxi. 22).

In the workings of Nature, the possibility of blind chance is also ruled out. The laws may be different from stage to stage, from plant to animal and from animal to man, from matter to life and from life to mind, but there is no inconsistency in the working of various laws; and in the infinity of Nature there are no gaps; there is continuity from end to end. The Qur'an asserts that if human mind exercises the right vision, it may survey the whole of existence without discovering a gap, a crack or a break.

Who created the seven heavens alike; you see no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent God; then look again, can you see any disorder? Then turn back the eye again and again; your look shall come back to you confused while it is fatigued (lxvii. 3, 4).

Materialism is also based on the universality and uniformity of causation but it asserts that matter works blindly. It works without goals and purposes, and beyond its unpurposive mechanism it has no meaning. It asserts that matter itself is a principle of unity but it is unable to explain how and why utter blindness and purposelessness can create infinite uniformity. Unity and uniformity, of whatever type, imply purpose and even consciousness. But the blindness of his matter affects the mind of the materialist himself who becomes blind to the conclusions of irrefutable logic. As a matter of clear logic, no theory of existence can work on the basis of utter blindness. The materialist says that purposes are the creations of human mind but, according to his own thesis, human mind itself is the creation of another

entity which is purposeless. He cannot explain how goal-seeking can emerge out of an existence the essential nature of which is devoid of all goals. The Qur'an teaches that the entire creation is meaningful.

And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in vain; that is the opinion of those who disbelieve (xxxviii. 27).

And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them for sport (xxi. 15, 16).

The seven heavens declare His glory and the earth (too) and those who are in them: and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His Praise, but you do not understand their glorification (xvii. 44).

According to the Qur'an, even matter is not meaningless or blind. It has submitted to the will of a unitary God and, therefore, acts in a uniform manner. The uniform working of matter is the prayer of the universe which man may not understand. If matter were utterly devoid of the potentialities of life, how could life emerge out of it or be sustained by it? So, according to the Qur'an, matter too is alive and purposeful in its own way; all physical life comes out of it and is re-absorbed by it. Even mind is not alien to it. Matter, life and mind denote varieties and gradations of being and they are the creations and manifestations of the fundamental unity of the creative mind of God. Phenomenal causation is uniform. Predictable sequence and real effective causation has its source only in the one creative mind. Neither life is the product of matter nor mind a mere by-product of life. As emerging from one fundamental unity of the creative force, they act and interact continuously. The materialists are out to prove the unreality of mind and the subjectivist idealists attempt to demonstrate that matter is nothing but a bundle of perceptions. The Qur'anic teaching is that all that exists is real. Truth negates no aspect of existence and the unity of truth which is a tenet of Islam requires that the reality of all types of existence be affirmed. From the Islamic view of the unity of existence, there necessarily

follows a theory of knowledge. A believer in this view would seek to discover the relation of everything to everything else; the purposive unity of God would be reflected in every atom. Emerson expressed this view beautifully when he said that the universe globes itself into a drop of dew, and Tennyson wrote that the complete understanding of a single flower would explain what God and man are. Professor Whitehead too has worked out his theory of knowledge and of being from this point of view that the mode of existence of everything is related to the mode of existence of everything else. A Muslim's search for knowledge would be always influenced by the outlook which he derived from the Qur'an that God is truth, everything is created in truth and is hence real and there is an ultimate unity which is the beginning as well as the end, the outer appearance as well as the inner reality.

Materialism has been changing its type from the atomism of Democritus and the hylozoism of early Greek thinkers down to the immaterial materialism of modern philosophers of physics and the dialectical materialism of Marxism. Matter has been resolved first into energy and then into a sort of system of abstract mathematics. Some great scientists like Eddington and Millikan have returned to God through mathematics and physics. Millikan says that there is no foolish philosophy than the sort of materialism that asserts that there is no architect of the universe. Materialism of the old mechanistic variety is already dead, but where Communism holds sway, we hear much of dialectical materialism or historical materialism. We have dealt with it already and the argument may not be repeated here except hinting at its inadequacy and inner contradictions. Marx started with the denial of God and of all absolute truth. If God does not exist, then only matter is left. Like all materialists he presumed the purposelessness of matter; but quite inconsistently he imported into his matter from the back-door the value-preserving absolute of Hegel and the God of theism under another

garb. What else is the God of theism except the creator and enhancer of values? As Hoffding has put it as a thesis in his philosophy of religion, religious belief at its highest is belief in the conservation of values. Marx put away God but affirmed that the dialectical process of otherwise blind matter continuously creates and guarantees the preservation and enhancement of value. But is this not the fulfilment of an eternal purpose?

Let us now see the distinctive feature of Islamic theism. As we have seen, the Qur'an requires us to believe in the purposiveness of creation and the unity of all life at its different levels from unconscious matter to conscious humanity. But this is a doctrine common to all theistic creeds. What, then, is the distinctive contribution of Islam?

As we have seen, Islam did not claim any originality. It merely amplified and made explicit what was already implicit in the teachings of all great prophets. Further, it harmonised and gathered into a single all-embracing unity all partial truths and scattered fragments of divine guidance, revealed in bits, and, according to the exigencies of times, to different messengers of God. All these messages and teachings had either been overlaid with distortions or were removed from their proper setting and viewed in their isolation. Islam combined them into an integrated whole and fitted each bit of truth in its proper setting, showing the measure and proportion of each to the whole and allotting to each its due weight. The *love* of Jesus was harmonised with the *law* of Moses and each element was shown its proper place and occasion. Thus the *loveless law* of Judaism and the *lawless love* of Christianity became elements in a system which emphasised both law and love. The Prophet of Islam and his immediate followers exemplified in their lives a firm discipline and law-abidingness with the high spirituality of Jesus Christ who denounced the worshippers of words and the devotees of empty ritualism. The eternal conflict between the missionaries of peace and the preachers of war was

harmonised in Islam which is essentially a religion of peace, but condemns passivity and peace-lovingness when persecution, intolerance, exploitation and cruelty have become so glaring that the lives of millions of human beings become an intolerable burden to them. Islam is not afraid of violence where freedom of conscience and freedom of expression have to be restored, where men and women have to be freed from the yoke of tyranny and injustice. But it condemns unnecessary bloodshed, the preaching of class-hatred and resort to violence for imperialistic purposes or merely to gain power for oneself, or one's party and nation.

But the most outstanding contribution of Islamic theism was its view of morality and spirituality. Spiritual life, before the advent of Islam, was regarded as something totally different and even antagonistic to physical and material life. A spiritual man was he who suppressed all his desires, lived in seclusion from the rest of humanity and gave up the pursuit of material success. Islam protested against this barren spirituality and proclaimed that moral life consists, not in blindly negating physical impulses and giving up all activity designed to secure the means of their satisfaction, but in controlling and regulating physical desires and material means of their satisfaction in such a way that the equal rights of other human beings may not be violated. A complaint was once brought before the Prophet of Islam that a certain Imam (leader of prayers) recited long chapters during the noon-day prayers. The Prophet, it is reported, became so angry with the man against whom the complaint was made that his face became red with anger. He said that there are business men, traders, weak people, children and old men among the congregation for whom it is difficult to stand the strain of long prayers. It is, therefore, advisable to offer short prayers when in congregation. It is further related by Bukhari that once a party of men came from a distant place to learn about the prayers of the Prophet. They were very much surprised when they found that the

Prophet prayed and fasted moderately. One of them said that if he had his way, he would pray all the twenty-four hours of the day and night. Another said that, if he could, he would fast throughout the year. The Prophet overheard them and told them, 'Look here, I am the Prophet of God and I fear God more than any other Muslim. But I fast and pray, I eat and drink, I marry and carry on the business of the world'.

Again, anyone reading the Qur'an will be struck by the fact that it contains, besides purely spiritual teachings and moral lessons of a high order, a large number of directions about physical life, economic problems, sex relations, and questions of war and peace, etc. This means that, according to the Qur'an, mundane affairs are not excluded from the sphere of spiritual life. The worship of God or service of the Maker includes all physical, biological, social, economic and political activities which further the purpose of God's creation. In what does the role of spirituality consist, then? Does spiritual or moral life stand apart from physical and material life? The Qur'an says no. The role of morality and spirituality consists in harmonising the conflicting requirements of material life. Morality is the power which adjudicates between the competing claims of our physical, sexual, economic and political existence. Just as the individual personality is a bundle of opposite desires each of which claims more than its due share and it is our higher self which has to decide how far each separate desire should be accorded the means of gratification, similarly the moral and spiritual faculty of man has to decide in what proportion and measure economic, political and biological requirements of society shall be fulfilled, which of these separate factors should be given precedence and under what circumstances. The total regulation of all life in such a way that the purposes of divine creation are fulfilled and society is not allowed to destroy itself by maladjustment is the function and role of spirituality. Moral and spiritual life, thus, does not stand as something apart from the

life of society in general; it is coterminous with that life.

Islam also does not recognise any compartmentalisation of life. According to the doctrine of *Tawhid*, all life is one; therefore no separate sphere can claim independence of others. The idea that the economic life of man is governed by separate laws, that the political sphere has its own independent laws, and that every other department of life can stand by itself is negated by Islam. All these separate spheres of life—economics, politics, sex, society and others—must submit to the overall supervision and guidance of the moral law, since it is the moral and spiritual vision of man that ultimately has to co-ordinate and harmonise the economic, social, political and biological activities of society. Far from being a totally separate sphere, spiritual life, according to Islam, pervades the entire gamut of human activity. This is the meaning of the Qur'anic verse: 'I have not created the jinn and men except to serve Me'. All life rightly lived and harmoniously developed is service of God Who is life and light.

The Ethics of Marxism

THE morality of individuals and groups is derived from many sources. It is partly derived from religion, partly from custom and partly from self-interest. It may sometimes be derived from an individual's outlook on life which he has developed freely by reflections on the nature of life. Whoever grapples seriously and earnestly with the problems of life is confronted with the question of good and evil; why to live at all and how to live are the most vital questions. Has existence any end or purpose? Is life governed by a must or is there an ought? Is it all necessity or are we in some sense free to mould or modify our destiny? Is there an absolute good or all good is relative to the life-situations or feelings of an individual? Is morality subjective or objective? Is it rooted in the nature of reality or is it a transient product of human contingencies? Has morality been changing from age to age and has it differed from nation to nation and from class to class or are there moral intuitions and moral principles universally valid for all mankind under all situations? Is there any end of life which may be called *summum bonum* or are the good or the ends of life also subject to relativity?

About these questions all higher religions and idealistic philosophies are ranged on one side in opposition to materialistic or naturalistic philosophies. These controversies form the central theme of Socratic-Platonic philosophy engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the Sophists who denied the objectivity of truth and virtue. Our modern age which has again thrown all inherited

beliefs in the melting-pot is once more face to face with this vital problem. Let us see what answer Communism has to offer to this vexed and difficult question.

Morality, philosophically considered, is based on one's theory of being. We have already dealt with the Marxist theory of being which is a materialist version of the Hegelian dialectic. Matter has no purpose but is subject to certain inviolable laws. Where there is no purpose there can be no ought and no obligation. The dialectical movement of matter proceeds by constant unfolding of opposites and their progressive transcendence. This movement is neither moral nor immoral; it is amoral. Whatever happens, happens because it must; it is meaningless either to praise or blame it. The question of right or wrong does not arise or, if one insists, it might be said, in the words of Hegel, that the real is the rational and whatever is, is right. If, for instance, in a particular stage of the dialectical movement cannibalism was established as a custom in particular tribes, then it was right in that phase. If later on, cannibalism dialectically passed into slavery, then slavery in that stage was either a negation of a negation or a higher synthesis of opposites, and it is not for us in the present stage justifiable to judge it retrospectively and call it cruel or unjust. Communism is now waging a relentless war against capitalism, not because it was always unjust, but because, by outstaying its proper dialectical usefulness, it is retarding the process of its self-abnegation. Capitalism, through all the phases of its development, starting in the beginning of the Industrial Revolution with cruel exploitation of women and children, was, according to the Marxists, a very necessary phase. They show no indignation against it as Carlyle, Ruskin or other moralists expressed. Carlyle said about it that if it went on like this, in fifty years Britain would go to hell. But the creed of Marxism is primarily maximum production and maximum utilisation and exploitation of natural and human resources. Therefore, consistent with their creed, no capitalist could have showered greater

praises on the achievement of capitalism than Marx and Engels did. By scientific methods, by handling increasingly complex organisations it awakened human capacities and developed human talents undreamt of by any previous system. By concentration of increasing wealth and by accumulation of surplus values it made miraculous advances possible. As Marx considered the development of capitalism as dialectically necessary for the proletarian revolution, he desired capitalism to develop to its utmost capacity, and to exhaust all its possibilities. The establishment of bourgeois democracy was for him a prerequisite of the proletarian revolution. Marx says in the *Critique of Political Economy* (1959): 'A social system never perishes before all the productive forces have developed for which it is wide enough; and new, higher productive relationships never come into being before the material conditions for their existence have been brought to maturity within the womb of the old society itself'. If a capitalistic system exists somewhere only in an embryonic stage, its rudimentary form cannot bring into being a large and solidly organisable proletariat. The Marxian outlook, being amoral, was not afraid of asserting paradoxically that in backward countries the development of capitalism with all its attendant miseries should be hastened so that the situation may be rendered worse and worse. He evidently believed in the formula that things must get worse in order to get better. Since the Communist revolution succeeded in a predominantly feudal and agricultural country like Russia, the Marxian dialectic has been greatly stultified, and now the Marxists are attempting to create upheavals even in primitively agricultural countries. So we see that in Marxian ethics justice or injustice, right or wrong, happiness or misery, have no place. If any phase is dialectically correct they are satisfied with it, whatever cruelties or immoralities it might entail and whatever human misery it might bring in its train. The dialectical process is ruthless; so must all believers and faithful followers of the process be relentless. The logic

of history recognises no tenets of private morality. Nietzsche said that the superman ought to be beyond good and evil; the urge of power supersedes all other laws. For Marx and Engels the necessity of gaining power for the proletariat justifies all the means necessary to be adopted for the realisation of this end.

In his ethics too Marx was a follower of Hegel. For Hegel, the only immutable principle is the principle of dialectical movement; there are no other eternal principles. All other principles are generated by the movement; by the law of transcendence they have their day and cease to be. The absolute is beyond good and evil. Kant had promulgated objective and universal morality and found certain categorical imperatives. Hegel thought that to the dynamism of history private morality was inapplicable. Great conquests cannot be justified by ordinary moral principles. Nazis derived their doctrine of the paramountcy of the State from the philosophy of Hegel. States ought to follow expediency and not the tenets of private morality. Covenants between States can be based only on stratagems; States should make treaties of friendship even with sworn enemies if power could thus be secured. When the need no longer exists they may be torn as scraps of paper. Hitler's amorality with respect to Russia particularly is an illustration of totalitarian ethics. In this respect the ethics of Hegel becomes almost Machiavellian. Croce, the great Italian philosopher, has also subscribed to the doctrine that States ought to work on expediency and not on morality; he considers it silly to judge the action of States on the basis of private morality. Hegel is the great protagonist of the amorality of history which according to him should also govern the action of States. According to him common morality is inapplicable to bourgeois society and many of the moral injunctions of Jesus, if applied to the conduct of a State, would speedily bring about its ruin.

The Marxists believe in the relativity of all morality. Morality, like religion, belongs not to the basic factors

of society but to its superstructure. From the beginning of civilisation society has been split up into classes, and morality has throughout reflected this class-antagonism. They repudiate all moral principles hitherto preached or practised as devices of the exploiting classes to perpetuate their domination. Respect for property, the commandment: 'Thou shalt not steal', the exhortation to be humble and meek and forgiving, mercy and charity and contentment and keeping of covenants, are all analysed as devices to keep down the exploited classes. Let us hear Engels about it (*Anti-Duhring*):

We, therefore, reject every attempt to impose on us any moral dogma whatsoever as an eternal, ultimate and for ever immutable moral law on the pretext that the moral world too has its permanent principles which transcend history and the differences between nations. We maintain, on the contrary, that all former moral theories are the product, in the last analysis, of the economic stage which society had reached at that particular epoch. And as society has hitherto moved in class-antagonism, morality was always a class-morality; it has either justified the domination and the interests of the ruling class, or, as soon as the oppressed class has become powerful enough, it has represented the revolt against this domination and the future interests of the oppressed. That in this process there has, on the whole, been progress in morality, as in all other branches of human knowledge, cannot be doubted. But we have not yet passed beyond class-morality. A really human morality which transcends class-antagonisms and their legacies in thought becomes possible only at a stage of society which has not only overcome class-contradictions but has even forgotten them in practical life.

We have to inquire here that if all morality has hitherto been based on class-antagonism, what about Communist morality? Is that any better than the former moralities because it too has no positive or valid principle except class-antagonism? They say they will replace all former class-moralities by a universal human morality when class-conflicts are over. Till then, for the Marxist, there is no other morality except any method or device which brings proletarian revolution nearer. In accordance with this principle, the Communist manifesto contains no word of right or justice and makes no appeal to any moral law. Marx criticised the French

Utopian socialists for their obsession with justice. Lenin says that hitherto morality has been a fraud in the interests of the landlords and the capitalists. But, does not Marxism justify all kinds of fraud and deception to bring about or consolidate the revolution? They inculcate that morality now is to be subordinated to the interests of the class-struggle. All Communist morality is to be subordinated to this task. 'We say: morality is what serves to destroy the old exploiting society and to unite all the toilers around the proletariat, which is creating a new Communist society. We do not believe in an eternal morality' (address to the Third Congress of the Russian Young Communist League of 2 October 1920).

Evidently the principle of Communist ethics is that the end justifies the means. Violence, fraud, hypocrisy, double-dealing, cheating, theft, robbery, adultery, if they serve the ends, are sanctified. So long as the struggle continues (and it may continue indefinitely till all nations become Communist) the only criterion of right action for the Communists is the degree to which it brings the goal nearer. Even Laski, so sympathetic towards Russia and Communism, became alarmed at the practical application of Communist ethics. He referred to the grave issues created by the behaviour of Communist parties outside Russia since 1917. He held them to have been marked by deception, ruthlessness, contempt for fair-play, willingness to use lying and treachery to gain some desired end, complete dishonesty in the presentation of facts—accusations which Marxists scarcely take the trouble to refute, contending that they are no worse than their opponents (quoted by Carew Hunt).

Douglas Hyde had a long first-hand experience of Communist ethics, as one of the leaders of Communism in Britain, building up the party and editing *The Daily Worker*. He says: 'The Communist has a vested interest in disaster. Economic crisis, social upheaval, defeat in war, or a victory which leaves a nation bled white even

though victorious—these are the preconditions of Communism. It would be less than human, even idiotic for the Communist, not in his heart of hearts, to long for them. It would be still more idiotic for the leaders of world Communism not to work for the creation of precisely such situations. Beneath the propaganda and smoke-screen of concern for social justice, this is always the real aim and purpose of the Communist party line, nationally and internationally' (*I Believed*, p. 30).

When moral sense is considered as rooted in bourgeois prejudices and the dividing line between good and evil is hopelessly blurred and it is said that the emancipated Communist is not expected to respect any rule of conduct as absolute and all precepts are to be judged only according to the criterion of helpfulness or hindrance with respect to the realisation of the ideal of setting up a classless society on the ruins of old laws and conventions, no shred of traditional morality or basic virtues is left. The experience of Douglas Hyde about the moral sense of the active Communists devoted whole-heartedly to the cause of the party is worth quoting:

The personal life of some of the Communists I met troubled me at first, but there I was confronted with a paradox, for the best Communists seemed to live the worst lives. In practice the shock effect did not last long and was eased by the fact that I was in the process of ridding myself of most of the restraints which had been the be-all and end-all of the nonconformity I had known.

I was shocked when the speaker I had listened to with such admiration, and who had spoken with such feeling and conviction, paired off nonchalantly and as of right with the equally sincere, attractive girl comrade I had marched and demonstrated with—taking her off from under my nose to bed and doing it quite openly unashamedly. It was shocking, maybe, but also disturbing; it left one restless and a little resentful with oneself for not having got there first.

It was disturbing to know that the girl who put the case for the new Communists before the unconverted with such skill and such violence, would, if you wished, nonetheless finish up in your arms at the end of the evening, leaving nothing left to be done, and that hardly a 'by your leave' was needed to accomplish this.

Such behaviour seemed curiously inconsistent to me at first, but it had its attractions and, as always, a Marxist theory to justify

and support it. That Marxist theory and practice has been not least among the attractions of Communism in every day. It has lured on those who did not want to be restrained and provided a haven for those with guilty consciences.

In such matters there was, as with everything else, only one rule to be observed: it must not interfere with one's Communism.

The very first Communist leader I met gave my initial shock of this sort. I suppose it was my nonconformist background which made me expect that any man with a mission would, in his personal life, be something of an ascetic, who denied himself the pleasures of the flesh.

But here was a man, an unemployed South Wales miner, who could sway great crowds with the burning intensity of his concern for the downtrodden and his anger at the injustices that they suffered, who was equally sincere and impassioned about these things in private conversation and who gave practically his whole effort to the cause.

Yet on the rare occasions when he could afford it, he would drink to excess on the grand scale, and, since it was free, would 'love' wherever he had an opportunity on an even grander scale. He took it for granted that every girl comrade was his for the asking.

I came to see in time that there was no need to doubt the sincerity of his Marxist beliefs because of such elements in his personal life, that they sprang, indeed, quite naturally from the Marxist views he held.

He later proved his sincerity in quite a spectacular fashion. One of his drinking and philandering bouts had seriously interfered with his work as a Communist. Not for the first time he was missing when he should have been addressing a meeting. The party's District Committee 'carpeted' him and told him that if he continued to let his personal life interfere with his party responsibilities he would be expelled.

'I'll show them,' he said.

That week-end he went out carrying a chair and addressing open-air meetings in every mining village he came to. Ill-nourished and exhausted by years of party activity and by his hectic personal life, he none the less in a single week-end addressed forty meetings. Then, as he finished the fortieth, his heart gave out and he dropped dead. He was sincere, he was brilliant, but his life had been distorted by the views he held.

This miner's ethics and personal life were not the products of a mere individual's weakness of the flesh; it was to a considerable extent the result of an ideology that he had imbibed from Communism. The sanctity of traditional morality had been sabotaged by its being

stigmatised as bourgeois morality and all ethics hitherto developed by civilised humanity had lost its absolute-ness having been proved to be a reflection of the forces of exploitation. The old structure was dynamited and the new had yet to be built, and hence in the life of the sincere and passionate Communist there occurred a moral vacuum. Only one standard of judgement was left: that which advanced the cause of the proletarian revolution was good, that which retarded it was bad and all the rest was indifferent to be lived or judged as one pleased. The fanatical Communist thinks and lives on a basis of war and all is fair in love and war; proletarian revolution is his love and the struggle to bring it about makes his life one continuous battle. In a war, deceit, cruelty, espionage, bribery, theft, dacoity become commendable if they help to win. As Trotsky puts it, 'the highest form of the class-struggle is civil war which explodes in mid-air all moral ties between the hostile classes'.

Marxist ethics is rooted in demands of what they call 'the concrete human situation'; eternally valid moral intuitions do not exist. They talk of proletarian morality as opposed to bourgeois morality but as the one was based on class-antagonisms, so is the other; even proletarian morality is not absolute, this too being a reflection of the class-struggle. Communism has to establish first the dictatorship of the proletariat and this phase is characterised by Lenin as one of 'violence unrestricted by law'. No Communist can say what the morality of that stage would be when a classless society has been firmly established all over the world; till then all ethics is the ethics of war to which private morality has always been acknowledged to be inapplicable. If all ethical systems reflect only the interests of the dominant class, proletarian morality will also continue to be only an instrument and a class weapon. One may have to wait indefinitely for the advent of a classless morality because even a Communist society when well organised will tend to some sort of class-stratification as it has in

fact already done in Russia. Those who hold the reins of power will make laws and inculcate certain moral principles primarily in their own interest.

The relativity of Marxian ethics and its repudiation of commonly held basic virtues creates a very dangerous situation for the non-Communist world. Individuals and societies deal with each other on the presumption of certain basic moral principles. They expect that truth will be told, promises kept, sanctity of life acknowledged, and honest difference of opinion respected. If all morality is considered only to be expediency, then beneath social and international relations no common ground is left to stand upon. Who would trust a Communist about anything because whenever it suits his party interests he may shift his ground without notice; one expecting hospitality may meet murder. Max Eastman, discussing Marxian ethics, in his *Science of Revolution* (p. 87), says about irresponsible Marxian generalisations about morals that they have unwisely blurred the distinction between moral intelligence and mere customary judgement, and attempted to reduce the whole wisdom of personal life, along with all the other achievements of the human brain, to a mere reflection of social relations that are determined by the state of the productive forces. 'In the Marxian religion, all moral ideals change completely with a revolution in these forces and relations, the good becoming evil and the evil good. Indeed, according to the strictest Hegelian kind of Marxism, evil and good are but two aspects of a simple dialectic process, the evil being the progressive and disturbing side—the natural dress and appellation of the revolution.' At the end of his career Lenin said: 'Without a party possessing the confidence of all that is honest in the class in question it is impossible to wage the struggle with success.' But one would like to know more closely the exact connotation of the word 'honesty' when used by a Communist revolutionary leader. It may only mean that the Communists must be true to their creed and deal frankly and honestly towards one another.

Like the business man's morality, honesty may be only the best policy for them and that too within the sphere of the party. With respect to the rest of the world, Communism feels no such obligation or necessity; for this creed honesty as such has no intrinsic value; it is to be inculcated or practised only as an instrument of policy, as a means to an end.

Religion in Soviet Russia

IF religion is taken in a broad sense as a view of existence and man's place in it, there is hardly any individual or a community which is without a religion of one type or another. Totemism, fetichism, animism, nature-worship, polytheism, theism, pantheism and even materialism and atheism—all come under the category of religion. Even devil-worship is a religion. Religion in the broad sense cannot be isolated from the life of man. Whether the tenets are consciously formulated or work vaguely at the unconscious level, the religion of a person or community affects ideas, emotions and actions in a myriad ways directly or indirectly. Whenever any part of humanity is convulsed with a great upheaval, socially or politically, it is a metamorphosis of outlook and one may call it a basic change in the religious attitude. Communistic revolution has been catastrophic in the revaluation of all values, for better or for worse. It could not attempt to change all Russian life without coming into violent conflict with the orthodoxy. The Orthodox Church and Tsardom were in intimate alliance; the old order of things—social, political or economic—was organically related to certain religious dogmas. Orthodoxy was the prop of absolute monarchy, priestly hierarchy, relics of feudalism, sectarian persecution and economic exploitation. The Tsar was the supreme autocrat of the Orthodox Church who could be captured by a rascal like Rasputin in the name of religious fanaticism. The village priests were superstitious, illiterate and grasping. The Webbs, in their magnum opus *Soviet Communism* (p. 808), describe the

state of things as follows:

In Tsarist Russia Christianity was at its worst. . . . The monasteries, enjoying large revenues, were nests of miracle-mongering. Throughout the vast Euroasian continent indigenous pagan magic and incantations held their own amid the Christian rites and such Christian doctrine as the peasant was taught. It is scarcely to be wondered that, after reading a plain, objective and not unsympathetic account of Russian religion, the professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of London declared in 1934 that he could only come to one conclusion, and it is a conclusion that all true friends of religion will share—nearly all that religion has been, and has meant, in Russia ought to perish for ever from the face of the earth and from the memory of men.

The Bolsheviks had no experience of any pure or rational religion, preaching or practising social justice. They identified all religion with this most corrupt version of Christianity. Most irrationally they came to the conclusion that belief in God or a spiritual background of life was the cause of all this obscurantism, magic and superstition. As this corrupt religion had sapped the mental and moral energies of a whole people making them submit to tyranny and injustice, Marx and Engels wanted to make a clean slate of it. It was a violent reaction against superstition that made them deny any factors in life beyond matter and the senses. Even philosophical idealism became taboo. Matter is solid, mind is imponderable and illusory; hence whoever considers mind to be primary would tend towards spiritualism which, according to Marx, Engels and Lenin is the breeding ground of all unscientific attitudes towards existence. Reaction against religion made Marx and Engels staunch materialists, and for them science and rationalism were identical with materialism. Mind itself is a product of matter and there is no Super Mind or God who creates or directs the universe. Even the human mind or will is not an efficient cause in the chain of material causation. This is the position of uncompromising atheism taken up by the founders of Russian Communism. As matter only exists, all true knowledge is the knowledge acquired by the methods of physical science. Nature is nothing but a system of material phenomena and the supernatural has no existence. There is no mind, no soul, no immortality, no survival or revival of personality after death. Human ego is a reflection of the body; it arises and perishes with it. Supernaturalism, accepted by all religions, is an opium of the people. The revolution must be based on defiant and militant atheism. The Bolsheviks started as fanatical iconoclasts. Violent revolutions are not tolerant of anything that savours of a contrary ideology. They conceived of religion as an evil that could not be mended, therefore it must be ended by the use of all weapons in the armoury of the revolution. The Communists worked throughout the length and

breadth of the country with a proselytising zeal effecting mass conversions to atheism. The priests were persecuted along with the landlords and capitalists. A number of priests were killed. The lands of the monasteries were expropriated by the peasants and the kulaks had a substantial share in the loot. In many places churches were converted into clubs or schools or storehouses for grain. In the first years of the revolution, the anti-religious zeal continued to gain momentum. All schools were secularised and all religious teaching was forbidden. Anti-God museums were established in secularised churches and monasteries, in which were exhibited exposures of the sham miracles by which the clergy had deceived the people; sacred relics which had been made objects of worship; pictures displaying the close associations of church dignitaries with the Tsar and with the army officers; diagrams of graphic statistics showing how great were the revenues extracted by the Church from the peasantry; and everything else calculated to inflame public opinion against the organised religion that had hitherto deluded the people (*Soviet Communism*, Webbs, p. 810).

All this anti-religious propaganda was undertaken with the direct or indirect support of the State. Conferences of party leaders were held to discuss plans of propagating atheism among the various sections of the population. A weekly newspaper *Bezboznik* (The Godless) was issued. The Union of the Godless had numerous branches all over the country and there was a network of propaganda centres. In 1929, an 'All-Union Conference of Anti-Religious Societies' at Moscow changed the name of its central organisation to the 'Union of Militant Atheists'. By about 1935 about half the population had been made either positively atheistic or indifferent to religion. Dr. Hecker says that propaganda against religion succeeded because it meant emancipation for various groups, communities and classes which had been formerly suppressed with active support by organised religion. People wanted a social and economic revolution. This powerful and desirable urge for freedom was exploited by atheistic propaganda assuring the people that they could not achieve their cherished objects until all religious belief which stood in the way of their liberties was swept away. People believed easily in atheism because religion as hitherto practised had

actually worked as a reactionary force. D.J. Dallin, in his book *The Real Soviet Russia*, has surveyed most objectively the ups and downs in the Soviet religious policy. He says that the Soviet religious policy has changed from time to time concomitantly with political and international exigencies. 'Russia has experienced no less than three violent outbursts of the anti-religious movement, of persecutions and closing of churches, in the twenty-seven years of the Soviet regime. And three times, after each outburst, came periods of relief, of moderation, of compromise.' In the first phase there were ruthless persecution and execution of priests. The freedom of conscience, guaranteed by paragraph 13 of the first Soviet Constitution, meant in actual practice the freedom of only the atheistic conscience. All citizens were accorded the right of religion, but religious propaganda, wherever it raised its head, was rigorously suppressed. In theory people were free for religious as well as anti-religious propaganda but Stalin declared in his interview with an American labour delegation in 1927:

The party cannot be neutral in respect to religion, it wages an anti-religious propaganda against all religious prejudices because it stands for science. There are cases of party members interfering with the full development of anti-religious propaganda. It is good that such members are expelled.

This is a frank admission of the real aims and methods of Soviet Communism. Its entire ideology and methodology is of one piece. Belief in God or spiritual realities runs counter to its basic concept on which the whole superstructure is built. If this is a fact, religious freedom is a hollow, sham and hypocrisy. The party rules the State and regulates the lives of all individuals in detail. No believer in God can become a member of the party and, if lax in anti-religious zeal, he is liable to be expelled.

Soviet Communism is based on an unscientific, un-philosophical, dogmatic, fanatic creed of atheistic materialism. It is not only intolerant of other religions but is positively and militantly hostile. It has all

the characteristics of an organised Church, the Communist Party representing the priesthood; there is a hierarchy with an infallible dictatorial Pope at the top of the pyramid. Dialectical materialism is deified as the creator and sustainer of existence working without consciousness, but somehow miraculously creating and enhancing the values of life. This dialectical God has no eternal truths and no eternal values, and works by a blind loveless law. With every new thesis, antithesis and synthesis its commandments change. All truths are relative and time-serving. There are no eternal harmonies towards which life has to advance. The dialectic advances by opposition and antagonism; therefore it cannot avoid violence in the achievement of its ends. There are no truths except its own passing phases and any idea or way of life which does not correspond to its passing phases must give way or be abolished by force. Communistic philosophy is inconsistent from the beginning to the end. If it is so sure of the inevitability of the dialectical process bringing about the enhancement of values through the play of opposites, it should give opposite ideas a freeplay to create a higher synthesis. But in practice it allows no antithesis to its own thesis.

The relations of the Church and the State have suffered great changes in the history of Christendom. Theocracy and theology tried to organise all thought and all life leaving little room for the freeplay of the human spirit; the excess of order strangled all liberty. Uniformity and worship of the letter became the death of the spirit and finally even great truths lost their essential value through rigidity and dogmatism. Two great revolutions in life-attitudes, the Renaissance and the Reformation, attempted to loosen the stranglehold. The French Revolution too, though it was exploited by a military adventurer, advanced the cause of liberty in many directions. Democratic liberalism gradually became an accepted political and intellectual creed. It did little to check the forces of developing capitalism, but freedom of thought and even action within circumscribed

limits became possible for individuals. Theology and theocracy lost their hold and people began to live in the conviction that reason freely applied to life is bound to ameliorate it in every direction. Dogmatic religion ceased to operate as a moulding and informing influence. But when liberal secular democracy was still engaged in perfecting itself through the method of trial and error, the two global conflicts shattered the belief in liberty and progress, particularly among nations where the war had left a legacy of economic, social and intellectual confusion. Men began to believe that individual and national liberties had been the creators of this chaos and confusion. They began to look back wistfully to the eras when all life was organised on the basis of unshakable beliefs and the duty, vocation and station of everyone was fixed by an unquestionable system. But the old dogmas of worn-out creeds could not be revived; their strength had been sapped by rationalism and materialistic science. The return to the old Church and to the old God having become difficult, if not impossible, a new God and a new Church were invented. This new God too must be a jealous God tolerating no second beside himself and the new Church, the visible body of this God must comprehend and regulate every aspect of the individual's life. It must become a Church universal and militant; its priesthood should have special rights and special duties. As disparity of belief or non-conformity stands in the way of total uniformity and complete regimentation, heretics must be hunted down. The Nazis, the Fascists and the Communists all proceeded to create this pattern which was a revival of narrow dogmatic and intolerant theocracy. Men bartered away their liberties for the illusion of racial glory, State power or the mirage of equal distribution of national wealth. The gods worshipped by the two sets were different. The Nazis and the Fascists worshipped the State whose chief attribute should be power for its own sake. But the Communists said it is a false God who is ultimately destined to wither. In its place matter and material

commodities should be worshipped because only they are eternally and substantially real. The Nazis aspired to racial domination but the Communists broadened their creed to class domination. Both believed in violence as an indispensable means of the realisation of their respective objectives. For both of them it was a sin to tolerate any ideology except their own.

European civilisation suffered a terrible setback through this return to a new theocracy. Imitating the constitutions of liberal democracies Soviet Russia inserted in its constitution liberty of conscience too as an article of faith, but it is really inconsistent with their ideology and their professed aims. Marx used to comment on liberal democracy by saying: what use is political liberty of the ballot-box to an exploited wage-earner, insecure about his daily bread? One could now address the Marxists and say: what use is the economic security and partial equality of a Communist worker if he cannot call his soul his own, if he is forced to believe in the creed of the rulers with the alternatives of total liquidation, persecution, or forced labour in a concentration camp? He gains little of the world even by losing his soul.

It must be frankly acknowledged that Russia does not believe in the liberty of the individual. The Communists have their own meaning of liberty. They say, liberty is only economic freedom which can be secured only in a totalitarian regime. People must be forced to be free. He who refuses to submit to this forced freedom deserves to lose all freedom. Whoever preaches individual liberty outside the pale of Communism is a traitor to the cause and must be dealt with as a saboteur and traitor.

The final attitude of Communism with respect to religion remains unaltered, but its policies have varied according to political exigencies. After anti-religious persecution had reached its zenith in 1923 the Soviet government found it wise to make concessions to international opinion. The G.P.U. continued to control and regulate anti-religious propaganda and the Union of the

Militant Godless continued its working supported by the Komsomol, but brakes were put on open persecution. The Orthodox Church was allowed a new lease of life when a patriarch like the Metropolitan Sergei assured the Communist Party of his loyalty and allegiance in all matters of State. By the permission of the government a patriarchal synod was established. The Patriarch flatteringly proclaimed that 'the joys and successes of the Soviet Union are also ours', but did he not realise that a good part of the joys of the Soviet Union lay in the progress and propagation of atheistic materialism which is diametrically opposed to the Patriarch's faith? This spurious amity between the Church and the State could not stand the strain of further radical steps in the Communistic experiment. With attempts at collectivisation there was a swing of the pendulum again towards clerical repression and persecution. The priests began to be exiled and many churches were closed. Hitherto, at least, as an article in the constitution the freedom of religious as well as anti-religious propaganda was allowed. Now the paragraph permitting it was revised as follows by the Congress of Soviets of the R.S.F.S.R. in 1929:

In order to assure the workers of true freedom of conscience, the Church is separated from the State, and the school from the Church, and freedom of religious worship and anti-religious propaganda is recognised for all citizens.

This is the type of religious freedom granted to all citizens, in order to assure 'true freedom of conscience'. A man is free to worship but not to propagate his religious belief; he must keep his belief to himself and not communicate it to others; but his opponent, the atheistic materialist, is completely free to do anti-religious propaganda. This is the meaning of liberty and equality under Communism: liberty for him only who thinks and feels and acts according to your prescribed ideas; limitation and thwarting for everyone else. People may worship whatever they please, but worshippers of

other gods must not expect equality of treatment in any vital matter of life. They can neither be trusted nor entrusted with power and responsibility because the State considers them as potential enemies to be closely watched. Even if a religious man remains alone with his God, if his intimacy with Him is known to the State, he is a collaborator with the enemy because God is an enemy of atheistic materialism which is the core of the creed on which a new society and a new humanity are being built.

Russia deals with religion only as a political problem which is for her a national nuisance, a relic of the Dark Ages and off and on a source of international policy. In 1934-5 Russia felt the need of collective security and support of the League of Nations. The goodwill of a shocked world could not be secured without some show of abatement in anti-religious propaganda and persecution. Again there was a pronouncement of appeasement. 'We do not persecute religion by any means. We demand from Church parishioners that they refrain from interfering in politics. The old clergy, bound to the old regime, would not abandon their struggle against the Soviet power, and it was necessary for us to resort to repressions. But now they have apparently turned their faces in our direction and the Church is free.' Perhaps some clergy like the Metropolitan Sergei had turned their faces in the direction of Stalin to retain or regain power or to save their skins, but the more obvious fact was that Russia had chosen to turn its face in the direction of an international concord, temporarily for her own security. Russia has been turning her face in various directions according to her own dialectic. The end has been professedly constant; change of means is not considered as inconsistent. The necessity of conciliating religion lasted till the great purge of 1937. During this purge religion was again considered to be a hot-bed of intrigue against the Soviet regime. Thousands of parishes were closed and a great number of priests became victims of a mounting rage, accused of espionage and sabotage. When there were none left to be

purged or liquidated, the fury abated again but, in order not to forget the ultimate ideal of establishing atheism, the central committee of the Communist Party reminded its members that they were forbidden to practise religion. Whosoever desires to worship God or Christ let him do so but he must not expect to wield any power in a State destined for the establishment of atheism. The old generation of priests continued to dwindle and a new generation could not be educated in religion, so the sphere of religious belief continued to shrink and it was hoped that this gradual process would end religion altogether in a generation or two. As nothing can be published in Russia without the permission of the government, the Bible could neither be published nor imported from abroad.

The political situation created by the war in 1939 became favourable for religion. After systematic campaigns against religion, the Soviet found quite a large number of villagers still cherishing religious sentiments, whose whole-hearted support in a great war could not be acquired without considerable concessions. On the other side, Hitler was found encouraging the Orthodox prelates and priests living in Germany as emigres. They were receiving financial support from the German government in preparation for the campaign against Russia that Hitler was contemplating. Nazism like Bolshevism had no sympathy for Christianity; it too had developed a creed of its own which was a revival of paganism. For Hitler the support of the Orthodox Russian Church was a valuable political weapon against atheistic Communism. Hitler presented himself as a protagonist of Orthodoxy as the other dictator, Mussolini, proclaimed himself as a protector of Islam to enslave Muslim Africa. Hitler achieved considerable success in this respect. In the regions occupied by Germany Russian priests prayed for the success of German arms and some Church dignitaries went over to the German side. The Soviet became alarmed and was compelled to vie with Hitler in patronising religion. Churches began to be restored and the patriarchate was revived.

Russia wanted desperately allies in countries bordering on her territory, but in these regions large portions of the population adhered to the Orthodox Church. Their alliance could not be secured by violent anti-religious propaganda. Politics, like adversity, brings in strange bed-fellows and necessity knows no law. Compromise with racialism as well as religion became urgent for Soviet Russia as an appeal to Russian nationalism also began to be handled as an effective weapon. None of these 'isms' could by any stretch of imagination become elements in Russian Communism but they were all powerful forces which must be exploited to the full in the game of power politics. Pan-Slavism and Orthodoxy had both to be taken into the service of Communism. As a gesture of goodwill, *The Godless* and *The Anti-religionist* stopped publication.

In Germany, Hitler had become God-incarnate and the Nazis, still taking the name of God in vain, worshipped Hitler as the embodiment of Divine Truth. Nazism was not overtly atheistic because the name of God still served their purpose. But Stalin, following in the footsteps of Marx, Engels and Lenin, was a confirmed atheist, and so it is one of the curiosities of the Russian ideological situation when we find the Metropolitan Sergei hailing Stalin as 'the divinely appointed leader of our armed and cultured forces leading us to victory'. A man who does not believe in God and is a leader of the anti-God campaign is 'sincerely believed' by a great Church dignitary as 'divinely appointed'. What infinite toleration on the part of God to love His greatest enemy to the extent of commissioning him as one of His great prophets! This is the abject condition to which religion is debased when it becomes subservient to politics.

The somersault in the attitude towards religion is described by Dallin as follows:

The Church leaders—for the first time since the revolution—published a book in Russia on religion, entitled *The Truth about Religion in Russia*. Expensively printed, despite the difficulties

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experienced by the printing industry in wartime, and richly illustrated, this book sought to prove that religion was free and that, in general, there had never been any persecution of religion in Russia on the part of the government. Any unpleasant developments that had occurred had been due to the activities of the Union of the Godless and not of the government! (As already indicated, this loyal interpretation had been used by the clergy as a defence mechanism since 1930.) Despite its loyalty and patriotism, however, this book was not distributed through bookshops. It was circulated only among Soviet grandees and institutions abroad. It is worth noting that it was printed in the printing works which used to print 'The Godless.' Apparently the N.K.V.D. division, which had previously directed the anti-religious propaganda, was now directing the pro-religious activities behind the scenes. No doubt the very same person did both jobs.

The Orthodox Church has been resurrected since 1942 but the principle of democratic election has been abolished. According to the new Church constitution of 1945 the Patriarch is made all-powerful; he appoints the bishops and the bishops appoint the priests. In this way the Patriarch completely controls the personnel of the churches; but who controls the Patriarch? In order to keep the Church as subservient to the State, the Council of People's Commissars appointed the State Council on Orthodox Affairs. The Council was headed by Georgi Karpov and his three assistants. This agency of the Soviet government stands above the Patriarch and the Metropolitan. Atheism has established complete control over the Church which has now been resuscitated for political reasons. The atheistic party leaders control the politics of the Church. The Controller Karpov belonged to the G.P.O.-N.K.V.D. which conducted anti-religious campaigns for a long time before this change of policy. A member of the Communist Party who proclaims himself as an atheist regulates the relation of the Church and the State. Is it possible to conceive of any situation as more hypocritical or more ironical than this?

Patriarch Alexei is thankful to God for appointing Godless leaders to lead Russia to victory and glory and he calls Russia a Christ-loving country. 'Above all,



let us thank God for sending us wise men to lead our country and for heading it by the *divinely chosen* genuine leader, I.V. Stalin, who to this day has led our fatherland to success and will lead it in the future to unprecedented glory'. To match this utterance of praise and thanksgiving, the Metropolitan, Nikolai, says that Stalin combines in himself the best and the highest and the profoundest wisdom. The churches are asked to pray for the well-being and flourishing of the 'God-send' leader of the peoples of our 'Christ-loving country'. But Stalin is an avowed atheist. If he is the possessor of the highest and the profoundest wisdom, does it not follow logically that it must be absolutely true that God does not exist, the soul is only an attribute of matter, all spiritual attitudes and values are only reflections of material needs, for these are the beliefs of Stalin, according to which he is committed to mould the lives of the peoples in his charge. How could such a man be divinely appointed and divinely guided and how could his people be Christ-loving and atheistic at the same time? To what base hypocrisies and contradictions has religion been reduced in Russia!

Sydney and Beatrice Webb give a sufficiently objective picture of the religious situation in Russia although they write with a slight bias for the Communist attitude. Their main conclusion appears to be that people are not persecuted for holding privately any religious belief or adhering to any particular kind of worship, and even minor posts in the government which do not require initiative or leadership are open to the believers of any creed. There is no direct persecution but discouragement and restriction of opportunities. Religious believers are not *persona grata* in the Soviet. Let us quote from their great book:

The Social atmosphere in the U.S.S.R. is unfriendly to any form of supernaturalism; just as the social atmosphere in the U.S.A. and Great Britain is unfriendly to any dogmatic atheism. But so far as the present writers could ascertain in 1932-34, there is in the U.S.S.R. today nothing that could properly be called persecution

of those who are Christians any more than there is of Jews, Moslems or Buddhists. There is no law against the avowal of belief in any religious creed or the private practice of its rites. There is no exclusion from office (apart from the voluntarily recruited vocation of leadership) of men or women who are believers. There is now-a-days no rejection from the public schools and colleges of the children of believers. Churches, mosques and synagogues are still open for public worship, which any person is free to attend. The services are conducted in each case by the religious teachers (priests, mullas, etc.) whom the respective congregations choose to maintain. All the buildings are national property and they are leased free of rent, but subject to the payment of the ordinary taxes, and to the keeping of the building in proper repair, to self-formed religious societies of particular religious denominations, which make themselves responsible for the maintenance of clergy and other expenses. Births, marriages and burials may be blessed by religious rites, either in the home, in the cemetery or in church, by the desire and the expense of the person concerned. The priests of the Greek Orthodox Church are to be seen, in the cities, walking in the streets in their religious garb, and in the country working in their gardens, without molestation or abuse. Icons may still be seen without concealment in many a peasant's *Izba* even in the collective farms. Christians, Jews or Moslems are not as such refused employment, nor are their children excluded from the schools and colleges, although no provision is made there for religious instruction of any kind. Parents are not forbidden, to give, within the home, religious teaching to their own children; but no school (and no assemblage of children outside the family) for the purpose of religious instruction is permitted. The religious societies and the clergy are forbidden to undertake or promote any educational or charitable or recreational work as a corporate function of their corporation, or in connection with the churches. The priests, in short, are allowed to do nothing beyond holding services for worship, and performing religious rites connected with births, marriages and funerals at the request and expense of the family concerned. By the alteration of the law made in 1929, any public propaganda of religion (apart from conducting services and preaching sermons in the church) is made a penal offence; although anti-religious propaganda continues to be permitted and even encouraged. No religious books (at any rate, in the Russian language) are issued by the government publishing establishments; and none are allowed to come from abroad. In short, although there is no persecution of individuals, because of their holding any religious belief, there is a great deal of restriction on any corporate or public religious activities. The Soviet Government and the Communist Party show no favour to any religious belief, and persistently direct the whole force of public opinion against it. To imagine or believe that there is anything in or affecting the universe

or mankind, in any unnatural or supernatural way, contrary to the ascertained truths of science, and at the same time not amenable to scientific investigation, is—so the Communists declare—merely the superstition and faith in magic of the ignorant. But the ordinary citizen is not punished for his ignorance in being a believer, even in what is thought to be magic. There is no persecution of the silent for a spiritual vision of the universe. What the Communist Party maintains is a rigid rule for itself. Its own membership, including probationary candidature for its membership, is open to no one who does not whole-heartedly and outspokenly declare himself an atheist, and a complete denier of the existence of every form or kind of the supernatural.

In justification of these suppressive and restrictive attitudes, the Webbs offer the oft-repeated plea that the clergy are, in the large, believed to be hostile to the Soviet government and all its activities. The religious congregations are suspected of sympathies with the counter-revolutionary intrigues and conspiracies that are supposed to be perennial. They hope that the motives for intolerance may fade away as the Soviet government feels its own existence definitely ensured.

It may be asked: Shall a time ever arrive when the Soviet government feels absolutely secure, within and without? A whole generation was born and grew up in an environment and under conditions where there was no individual liberty of any kind. They were told that the State is infested with saboteurs within and surrounded all round by hostile nations and ideologies. The so-called bourgeois democratic liberty is in the first place valueless and an invention of the exploiters of the working masses, and if there are any values in it, as they were off and on grudgingly recognised by Lenin, the individual must wait for absolute security of the Communist State before he could be allowed to enjoy them. In the meantime generations are conditioned and educated in such a way that they have ceased to have any conception of non-material values. All traditional values have been revalued for them. They are asked to believe that they possess real liberty which means voluntary submission to the demands of dialectical materialism. The

school is separated from the Church as the Church from the State. Every child must come to some school and receive compulsory education up to adolescence. By this time life-attitudes are conditioned and moulded by education and discipline based on a definite ideology. Materialism and atheism form the background of teaching in every subject. The contrary points of view are vigorously denounced. But by and by the contrary point of view will cease to be a problem because they will never be presented to a pupil's consciousness. Religious books or books wherein there is found a free-play of the human spirit cannot be printed in Russia or imported from abroad. There is a censorship on all knowledge and literature far more comprehensive and rigid than the Catholic Church ever dreamt of. It is wrong to say that only religion is suppressed in Russia but science is free. Even science is not free in Russia unless a scientist subscribes to the creed of dialectical materialism which by itself is only a philosophical hypothesis and cannot really form the basis of any science. Many scientists in Russia have lost their jobs and been punished for disregarding dialectical materialism and dealing with scientific knowledge on the basis of free inquiry. Russia is in the grip of a narrow creed which is neither religious nor scientific. This narrow creed has become fanatical and militant. If a whole generation is taught only materialism and atheism in schools, colleges and universities and when there is no free book market in the country where one could come into contact with thoughts of past and present free humanity, how would belief in any supra-material reality arise or survive? The old believers will die out without being replaced because their children have received only anti-religious education. If one still wants to believe, let one indulge oneself in worship and religious ritual, but beyond that life must go on untouched by religion. A believer may be used as a cog in the machinery of the State where he submissively serves its purposes, but he must not be allowed to have any hand either in designing the machine or directing it.

What a travesty of liberty it is when it is said that people have liberty of conscience or religious liberty, when this liberty is confined only to silent communion with God or attending places of worship! Religious truth must be hidden under a bushel and atheism proclaimed from school, press, platform and radio stations. Anti-religious propaganda is permitted and encouraged through all the possible avenues and all the effective instruments, but to counteract this avalanche of theism even a rivulet of religious knowledge cannot flow. (Liberty in Russia means freedom to agree but not to disagree with the ruling power.) All the essential liberties of humanity, gained through the sufferings and martyrdoms of the great souls, are being sacrificed at the altar of a narrow, materialistic creed. The citizens may attain to some sort of material well-being but at what terrible cost! Humanity is being dehumanised at a rapid pace. Production has taken the place of all divine and human values. Russia proclaims to the world that it is working to bring about a revolution to establish a classless society. It has achieved some success in this experiment because millionaires and big landlords have vanished from the Russian scene. But are classes really abolished in every sense or have they assumed new shapes? A large class of well-paid bureaucracy has come into existence enjoying much higher remuneration and higher privileges than the large mass of workers and peasants. Are the interests of this class identical with the interests of the workers? That gulf has not been bridged. But it is said that it is as yet Socialism and not Communism; when the stage of the latter arrives there will be real levelling and equality and that millennium is yet far off. But is it a very great advantage for humanity to level economic classes to some extent and create privileged and unprivileged castes in their stead? Apart from the bureaucracy with comparatively better material amenities there is the class of Communist Brahmans who fill all the posts of power, responsibility and influence. Those who completely agree with them share in their power and privilege.

Only this caste can propagate its creed and mould all education and administration according to it. Others are free to worship in silence and indulge in their own ceremonies but they are, for all practical purposes, outcasts. If religion survives in Russia, for which the chances are dwindling from generation to generation, then the believers in all religions except materialism will be relegated to the position of pariahs in Hindu society. No Brahman interferes with the worship of the pariah but he is entrusted only with the meanest tasks. Russia may abolish economic classes, but it has established firmly the privileged and the unprivileged castes.

Disillusionment

THE have-nots, the disgruntled, the idealists with reformist zeal, the utopian planners of an ideal society, the equalitarians, those oppressed and dispossessed by economic exploitation, those who have witnessed moral degradation and physical misery as necessary by-products of *laissez-faire* capitalism, those suffering under imperialistic and colonial tyranny, those disgraced by racial domination, those who are able to work but cannot get work under an unplanned economic system, those disgusted with perverted versions of religion—all suffer from the illusion that if the old order of things is completely shattered, a new world and a new humanity can be created according to one's heart's desire. Communism promises to change fundamentally this sorry scheme of things and promises to everyone what he heartily desires if he gathers enthusiasm for a violent revolutionary change to establish a classless society, ruthlessly moving forward towards that goal. Communism promises to add social and economic democracy to a sham political democracy of the ballot-box. It promises work for all and lends dignity to labour. It promises liberty which will come at the end of ruthless suppression of all individual liberty. It justifies the dirtiest means because they are necessary to achieve the desired end. The world was never ideal in every respect in any epoch and in any civilisation. In every sphere of life there is room to reform and room to mend. So long as humanity retains its basic instincts, men will continue to be more or less unjust and people will continue to romanticise the past and idealise the future by imagination.

Every great revolution revives hopes of regaining a lost paradise or approaching a millennium or Kingdom of Heaven. It happened in the spiritual revolution brought about by the message of Christ; his votaries believed that the old world of injustices and material greeds is soon coming to an end; the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, to bring about which all physical comforts and material needs may be sacrificed. The poor in spirit will inherit the earth and the rich man who is proud and tyrannical will find it more difficult to enter heaven than a camel passing through the eye of the needle. To what extent Christianity succeeded in transforming earth into heaven is left to the student of history to judge. Six centuries after Christ the enthusiasm of the Muslim revolutionary movement cannot be over-rated. Muslims were conscious of a new dawn; all pre-revolutionary life was called 'the Days of Ignorance', when men groped in darkness and had no sense for abiding values. Islam succeeded a good deal in transforming individual and social life, but after a few years of reform there was a counter-revolution after which only a small portion of Islamic reconstruction survived. But the truth of Islam was so great and comprehensive that even a little of it that was left created a new culture or a synthesis of cultures that advanced humanity in every direction for about six centuries. It fell far short of that which Islam aspired to do but even in its un-ideal state it proved far superior to the contemporary world. The Reformation and Renaissance also were mighty movements towards the revaluation of life and generated great aspirations that were only partially realised. The French Revolution was a mighty upheaval. It put up a new Trinity of Liberty, Fraternity and Equality to be worshipped; besides this there was the goddess of Reason installed in the place of religious faith. Almost all Europe rose and sang the song of liberty with one voice, and in one chorus. A military genius exploited the upsurge of this volcanic enthusiasm and liberty, fraternity and equality were drowned in the intoxication of conquest. Nothing was

left of liberty except a right to vote which proved to be utterly useless. Fraternity became a remote ideal and a pious wish and equality received a severe set-back by creating a privileged class of bourgeoisie and an impoverished proletariat subject to wage slavery and economic insecurity. History has taught the lesson that if man remains spiritually unchanged, no political, social or economic upheaval can create a Kingdom of Heaven for him. If man remains the same, *plus Ça change, plus C'est la meme chose*. The Qur'anic verse that 'God does not change the condition of a nation until there is a change in the spiritual condition of men' has been proved true by history. Whenever there is a great upheaval, hope deferred begins to revive and people begin to believe that this time at last humanity is really going to change. Some people in all countries became enthusiastic about the Russian struggle which overthrew a corrupt absolute monarchy, a degenerate aristocracy and a demoralising religious orthodoxy. The revolutionaries were proclaiming lofty aims and so far as the destructive phase of the revolution was concerned they were demolishing only those institutions which progressive humanity desired to be effaced from the surface of the earth. Let us state briefly how some of the famous writers and humanists started with overflowing enthusiasm and ended in utter disillusionment.

Let us take first of all the case of Andre Gide, for long a tormented introvert, at last transformed into a serene philosopher, a genuine socialist and a humanitarian. He became the champion of the underdogs, the outcasts and the down-trodden. He demanded like Bernard Shaw a better treatment even for the criminal offenders, who were after all, to a great extent, victims of heredity and social environment which was not of their own making. He demanded equality between the sexes in moral as well as material things. He became a champion also of the colonial people, like C.F. Andrews; he pleaded their cause in two travel books. His love flowed to all the socially unprivileged and the under-privileged.

When the Russian Revolution claimed to right all these wrongs and started with a show of equality and fraternity, he took up the cause of Communism and went on a special pilgrimage to Russia. Before going to Russia the great thing which appealed to him was the annihilation of all exploiters whose abominable formula he quoted in his *Journal*: 'Thou shalt earn *my* bread in the sweat of *thy* brow!' His ideas about liberty had undergone a catastrophic change. The great individualist and champion of personal liberty now began to realise that real happiness and liberty lay in the acceptance of a duty and an individual, in order to be really happy, must worship something super-individual, super-personal. If he cannot now believe in God, let him substitute the worship of humanity for worship of God, as his great countryman, the positivist philosopher, August Comte, had done before him. The Communists were saying much the same thing. Nietzsche had said: 'God is dead; let us now wait for the superman'. The Communists said God never existed; it was a fiction that suited the exploiters, and with the exploiters the fiction must perish. The Communists talked of humanity only and its material welfare. Personal liberty and individualism can never bring about a revolution; revolutions demand the sacrifice of self for a great cause. Andre Gide was, therefore, not perturbed that in the revolutionary upsurge for the triumph of great values personal liberties were temporarily thrown in the background. He found in Communism the duty to which liberty must be subordinated, and an object of worship more tangible than the invisible God. The collectivism of Communism began to appeal to this erstwhile individualist who saw now the final triumph of individualism in its self-supersession. Unless the individual self is superseded, the ego is left only with a horrible void. This great intellectual imagined the country of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky preparing to sacrifice herself to usher in a better world and a most just humanity. He imagined that Communism was inspired by universal human love. He identified himself

whole-heartedly with Communism believing that it stood for the preservation and exaltation of human values. He said in his *Journal* in 1931: 'I would like to cry aloud my sympathy for the Soviet Union and hope that my cry may be heard and have effect. I would like to live long enough to witness the triumph of that tremendous effort which I hope from the bottom of my heart will succeed and for which I would like to work'. His deep-rooted individualism was, however, not quite extinct. He really desired a synthesis between personal liberty and collectivism. He hoped that Russia would evolve her socialism according to a pattern in which artificial privileges have no place, in which wealth is more evenly spread out in society, in which there is no nepotism or favouritism and no class of parasites, but which preserves the essential personal liberty of the individual. He considered it a great error to think that Communism could not be combined with individualism. He thought it theoretically and practically possible to create a healthy synthesis of totalitarian economic order and that liberty of the individual without which no spiritual value can come into being or thrive, and in the absence of which the soul becomes a void.

Communism is a creed of alluring promises about liberty, fraternity and the inevitability of social justice to be established ultimately when the revolution has reached its destined end. It will be a panacea for all the ills of humanity. The Communist is, on the whole, a good analyst of the diseases from which humanity has suffered or is suffering and, after the diagnosis, an over-all remedy is proposed by the physician. When the physician after a lapse of more than three decades is still seen suffering himself from all those ills and somebody exclaims: 'Physician, heal thyself,' it is replied that chronic diseases even of the physician cannot be healed in a day and the evil legacy of the past has to be got rid of only gradually. For the real improvement of humanity even in Russia all the verbs of improvement are in the future tense. When you point to the lack of personal liberty enjoyed

by even a poor worker in the imperfect democracies, it is either said that personal liberty is a bourgeois fiction or if there is any value in it, it is already enjoyed by the Soviet worker in a higher degree, or when the internal and external enemies of the revolution have finally been routed, a genuine and superior kind of liberty will be the lot of all who have never tasted it. Russia has been feeding humanity on promises, is still doing so and will continue to do so indefinitely, but the promises will never be fulfilled because the Communist connotation of the meaning of liberty and human welfare is so fundamentally different, and even if it were not different, the fulfilment will continue to be postponed because after silencing all opposition, after the liquidation of all the malcontents, and after successfully conditioning the whole population to the acceptance of a particular way of life and a particular ideology, the surrounding world will continue to be hostile, which will necessitate limitation of liberties and lowering of the standards of living. There is no doubt, the Western as well as the Eastern world is suffering from manifold ills, but men of thought and men of action everywhere are devising ways and means of revising the traditional ways of life. The Russian contention is that chronic and serious diseases require radical cures; humanity is in need of a surgical operation. The Russian Revolution reminds one of a joke about a surgeon who was asked about the condition of the patient after the operation and he replied that the operation was successful but the patient had died! The famous Muslim Urdu poet Hali wrote a quatrain about reforms, saying that reforms ought to clear the cloth of smudges and spots but don't rub the cloth so hard that along with the smudges, portions of cloth also disappear leaving holes.

Andre Gide was one of those who sincerely believed that a surgical operation was necessary and the patient would not only survive and be restored to health but would gain additional vigour. An idealist is usually an optimist and gets easily enthused about a revolution

which uses idealistic slogans. That is the way Wordsworth felt about the French Revolution, but how great was his disillusionment when ugly realities took the place of beautiful ideals. During the years of enthusiasm Andre Gide wrote: "Why do I long for Communism? Because I believe it to be equitable and because I suffer on account of the injustices which I feel more strongly than ever when it is I myself who am favoured. Because the regime under which we live does not seem to me to protect man from the most grievous abuses. Because amongst conservatives I see only dead and dying things. Because it seems to me absurd to cling to things that have had their day. Because I believe in progress; because I prefer what is to be to what has ceased to exist. Why do I long for Communism? Because I believe that through it we shall be able to reach the highest culture and because it is Communism which can—indeed must—promote a new and better form of civilisation." Communism properly understood, he thought, needs to encourage individual values in order to get the best out of everyone' (quoted from *The God that Failed*, pp. 171, 172).

When still under the spell of illusion, Gide believed that Communism would not create an ant-hill utopia. At his heart he was still an individualist and he fell in love with Communism because he believed that after a mass affirmation it would bring about conditions in which men of particular idiosyncrasies like himself could be free to indulge in manners that are not anti-social. He was primarily a literary man and great literature is a free product of free individualities. Individualism and unrestricted exercise of free reason and even wayward sentiment is the essence of all genius. An artist is of necessity an individualist; he makes a contribution to the richness of human experience by the particularity of his approach to reality and his distinctive reactions to his environment. Only matter repeats itself and that too not completely. Life, at its highest, is not repetition or imitation but an individual way of thinking, feeling and acting. Gide could never love a society in which each

resembled all. He expected from Communism that by the abolition of unsocial and unjust privileges and by creating an equality of opportunity, it would encourage the development of distinctive personalities who, although playing on their own special instruments, would enrich the grand symphony of life. He really desired the enhancement of personal freedom that should go hand in hand with a genuinely democratic socialism. He said, he had not come to Communism through Marx whose German erudition was for him unreadable and un-understandable. It was his experience of the division of humanity into the privileged and the unprivileged, the undeservedly prosperous and the undeservedly miserable that had made him crave for a change towards a real equality of opportunity. When he heard that the Communists were demolishing the barriers between wealthy classes and the masses, that was according to his heart's desire. He expected from the Soviet Union what free democracies expect from the perfection of their own system. He went to Russia to find mind freed from serfdom, slavery and servitude of all kinds. He expected to find there no privileged class or party, no one pampered and no one starved. He was sorely disappointed. On his return from Russia he wrote: 'There was in my Soviet adventure something tragic. I had arrived there a convinced and enthusiastic follower in order to admire a new world, and they offered me, to tempt me and win me, all the prerogatives and privileges which I abhorred in the old world.'

Impact of Communism on the Muslim World

PROFESSOR Hallett Carr's six lectures, published in the form of a booklet with the title: *The Soviet Impact on the Western World*, form an admirable and objective analysis of the ways in which the Russian Communist Revolution has directly or indirectly influenced the Western world in a number of ways. He has divided these impacts into five varieties, namely, the political impact, the economic impact, the social impact, the impact on international relations and the ideological impact. We can do nothing better than follow a similar plan and study the Soviet impact on the Muslim world from all these five angles. Let us begin with the political impact. But to understand the genesis of the political impact one needs to go a little into the conditions of the various parts of the Muslim world before World War I. Before 1914, Western imperialism was at its height having successfully subdued all the so-called backward nations of the world. All Africa had been partitioned and all Asia was under the direct or indirect domination of the Western powers. The Turkish Empire was being sabotaged from within and attacked from without, tottering from its inherent weakness, and the collapse was being hastened by the would-be European inheritors of the estates of 'the sick man' of Europe. Against the organised might of industrialised West, the predominantly agrarian civilisations of the Muslim world felt weak and helpless. They had been reduced to the condition of the proletarian nations of the world, the producers of raw materials,

hewers of wood and drawers of water. Where they had a semblance of political independence their monarchies were degenerate and their governments were inefficient and corrupt. Neither in the countries under direct political domination, nor in the countries enjoying a shadow of political independence were the people conscious of their natural rights. Foreign rulers as well as their own governments had crushed their sense of self-respect and they were so inured to servitude of one type or the other that they had lost all consciousness of even elementary human rights. Even when they were awakened, they found themselves so shackled that despair of any practical remedy made them resign to their miserable fate. The Western powers infused into them an inferiority complex. They constantly heard of Western enlightenment, Western science, Western technology and Western modes of government and they were made to believe that these achievements and these institutions were products of the peculiar genius of the West, incapable of being properly initiated, imitated or assimilated by the nations of the East. They held that the Chinese civilisation was a static civilisation that had remained the same or stagnated for millenniums and the East was immovable. The poet of imperialism, Rudyard Kipling, sang that the East was East and the West was West, and the twain could never meet. He depicted the eternal passivity of the East in the following lines:

The East bowed low before the blast
In patient deep disdain;
She let the legions thunder past
And plunged in thought again.

Religious missionaries and political plunderers had started a systematic campaign against Islam. Falsifying the historical process deliberately or unwillingly they were attributing the contemporaneous backwardness of the Muslim world to Islam itself, forgetting that Islam was the torch-bearer of culture for many centuries after its advent, when the West was semi-barbarous and plunged in darkness. The missionaries preached that Muslims

could advance only if they renounced Islam and accepted Christianity, but the politicians were instilling the belief into these peoples that even then it would be to the advantage of the Oriental if he submitted himself willingly to the domination or tutelage of the West because the white man has been made the trustee of the coloured races by the will of Providence.

The first rude shock was administered to the superiority of the West by the Japanese who inflicted an abject defeat on a great Western power by making the art of killing as scientific as the West had done. The defeat of Russia and the rapid rise of an Asiatic power from feudalism to scientific industrialism sent a wave of joy and hope throughout the Eastern world. Now it was confidently believed that what one Oriental nation could do the others could do as well. The Muslim world had been partly shaken from its medieval slumber by that great religio-political genius, Jamaluddin Afghani, who went from country to country denouncing the degenerate monarchies and exhorting the intelligentsia and even the aristocracy of these nations to remould their lives according to the true principles of Islam and cease to be overawed by the West. Muslim countries were too weak and the West was too strong and the mundane rulers and spiritual guardians were too corrupt to listen to him or take even a few steps in chalking out a programme of action. However, he sowed the seeds of Muslim political self-consciousness which began to blossom and bear fruit in proper time. Thinkers like Sa'id Halim Pasha in Turkey, Mufti Muhammad Abduhu in Egypt and Sayyid Ahmad Khan in India smarted with the deep wounds of humiliation and diagnosed the ills from which their nations were suffering. Movements of reform combined with demands of political independence or the democratisation of institutions were started in all Muslim countries assuming diverse shapes according to circumstances. Young Turks subverted their absolute monarchy and compelled the Sultan to become a constitutional monarch. Egyptian nationalism began to gather momentum

and India demanded with irrepressible persistence the grant of responsible government.

Then came the great upheaval, the great Armageddon when the white robbers of the world fell out among themselves. They had hitherto ruled the East by prestige and a pretence of superior civilisation. They had not been content to be considered as technologically more skilful; they had also posed as morally superior and spiritually more refined. The Great War did a great work of debunking. All the cruelties and immoralities denounced by the ethos of all creeds were not only sanctioned but preached and practised as virtues against a hostile nation. Breaking of covenants, fraud, murder, deceit, rape and robbery were sanctified. The war among the so-called civilised people effected a complete revolution of values and every European nation repeated the injunction and creed of Milton's Satan who said: 'Evil, let thou be my Good'. The white masters had to enlist the sympathies of their slave populations to assist them to win the war. Oriental mercenary troops poured into all battlefields and helped in the murdering of European civilisation. Now they saw this great culture at first hand at its worst.

The warring nations were also compelled to use ideological weapons. The resources of subject races had to be mobilised to the full and this could not be done without making these nations believe that the cause for which they were asked to sweat and shed their blood was in some way their own cause. The British might have tried and perhaps did actually try to some extent to appeal to the subject nations to come to their assistance because they were better rulers than the enemy who, if victorious, would replace them. But this mode of appeal fell flat for two reasons. Firstly, because people had seen through the hypocrisies of the vaunted blessings of imperialism and they had become self-conscious coming to the conclusion that even a good government is no substitute for self-government. The second great factor was the enunciation of war aims. American help was sorely needed but America would not step into the battlefield.

if it was only European imperialists of one type or other struggling to snatch the loot from one another's hands. America had made a religion of democracy. The Allies could appeal to America only in the name of democracy, to make the world safe for democracy. Woodrow Wilson, in the middle of World War I, threw the word democracy into the international arena by proclaiming it as an Allied war aim. He said that there could be no peaceful world in the future except on the basis of a partnership of democratic nations. As a result of this the Weimer republic made Germany democratic and the States which arose all over Europe hastened to equip themselves with democratic institutions.

Wilson was sincere but the imperialist Allies were hypocritical about conferring the blessings of genuine democracy on those whom they could exploit only by depriving them of the right to mould their own destiny. The war having been won, they conveniently forgot all about democracy. They began to suppress movements of national independence everywhere. Spain and France crushed the brave attempt of the Moroccans to achieve independence. Abdul Karim, the valiant and noble patriot, was captured and exiled by France. In India, Rowlatt Act was passed to suppress all national agitation for independence making it lawful to arrest, intern and incarcerate the patriots without trial. All machineries of suppression were set in motion until a power-intoxicated British general surrounded a mass meeting in Amritsar and machine-gunned the whole audience which included a number of women and children who had gathered there only for a spectacle. The speakers there were not inciting people to violence; they wanted only the war aims to be fulfilled and the solemnly given pledges duly honoured. The poor creatures did not know that war was strategy and deceit and the pledges were used only as weapons of deceit to be discarded for other weapons when they ceased to be of any use for imperialistic exploitation.

The nations of Asia including the Muslim nations were

completely disillusioned. Turkey was dismembered and the newly-created Arab States partitioned among the victorious European Allies under the guise of mandates. British imperialism driven to sore straits during the war had made contradictory promises to the Arabs and the Jews about Palestine. The double-dealing philosopher-statesman Balfour sowed thereby the seeds of dissension among the Arabs and the Jews who had hitherto lived peacefully together for centuries: all in the interest of diabolical imperialism.

After the 1914-18 War, the Turkish nationalists proposed to set up a nation-State and to gain that object made heroic sacrifices, but the imperialist Allies had decided to dismember even this natural and national nucleus of a nascent democratic republic. The Turks prepared themselves for westernisation in every phase of life retaining from their Oriental heritage only a faith in the fundamentals of Islam, but imperialism would not be satisfied with this and would not leave them in peace because a world of free democratic nations went against its basic urges. Imperialism is parasitical and predatory; the freedom of small and weak nations would sound its doom. The Arab States began to realise that they had only changed their masters and the independence they had gained under the mandatory system was a camouflaged form of vassalage. The British hero who manoeuvred the Arab revolt was one of the few Britishers who really loved the Arabs and desired them to be genuinely free. He was so disgusted with British perfidy that he renounced everything and wanted no honours or title to be conferred on him for his glorious services. He met the King and told him with exceptional daring and candidness that in any next war in which the Arabs were involved, he would find him fighting by the side of the Arabs even against the British, if it came to that.

The imperialist powers wanted to tighten their grip on what they already held and extend their dominion and influence still further as a reward of victory. But the forces let loose by the Great War and the ideas

broadcast by idealistic propaganda for the right of self-determination of all nations, great or small, had created a new world spirit. Disgusted Wilsonian America shrank back into isolation leaving the victorious Allies to follow their old methods of power politics.

Even before the end of the war a volcanic upheaval occurred in the vast Russian empire spreading over two continents. Corrupt and feudal Russia could not stand the strain of a long war; it staggered, sagged from within and collapsed. This afforded a rare opportunity for the revolutionary socialists. All imperial powers got alarmed for they would prefer even a corrupt Czarism to any anti-imperialistic socialism. The world then saw the spectacle of the Allied forces intervening in the internal commotion of another country in order to make it safe, not for any type of socialism or democracy, but for undemocratic imperialism and feudalism. Between the imperialist Allies there were no fundamental ideological differences; all of them wanted only a spurious political democracy at home and chances of exploitation for the weak and subdued nations. Russia triumphed ultimately against the Allied intervention. Now Russia denounced imperialism ideologically and practically as it had never been done before. It renounced all Russian Czarist aims and claims on the adjoining territories and, having set its own house in order, creating some sort of a cosmos out of the chaos, it began to spread its anti-imperialistic ideology analysing the aims and methods of imperialism in an unprecedented manner. All nations groaning under the yoke of foreign domination and exploitation began to look to Russia as the harbinger of a new free world. Not only the down-trodden nations but the workers and socialists in the European countries themselves watched the Russian experiment with intense interest and admiration excusing all its violences and drawbacks as a necessary passing phase in the creation of one world and one humanity. Men like Andre Gide, later disillusioned, went into hysterics about it. British Labour Party leaders like the Webbs made a thorough and sympathetic study

of it and expressed the conviction that a new civilisation with a superior level of social justice is gradually taking shape.

Now we come to our main topic to see as to how the Muslim world in general reacted to it. In its earlier phases Russian Communism renounced its Czarist demands on the Muslim world. No territorial claim was advanced against Turkey and the virtual partitioning of Iran between Britain and Russia was categorically repudiated. Lenin started the policy of encouraging the Muslim world to shake off Western imperialistic yoke everywhere. Muslim nations and Communist Russia had one aim in common, i.e. the overthrow of Western imperialism. This common political aspiration brought them closer together. This phase continues up to this day. In this persistent policy Russia has committed two major blunders which shocked the Muslim world and have damaged irretrievably the links that Russia desired to create with the Muslim world. One was the recognition of Israel which was a thorn planted by the power of the world Jewry and by British imperialism in the side of the Arab world. In any future world war Russia would reap the bitter fruits of this major diplomatic blunder. The Arab world would never forget and forgive this vital injury and Russia must be repenting the mistake now that Israel would be a pivotal point in the Middle East defence that is being organised against a possible Russian threat.

In the resurgent nationalism of all Eastern countries imperialism is trying to retain its hold by force. The British are manoeuvring to force Iran to let her oil resources be in British hands or otherwise stop the production of oil to imperil it to the extent that it is compelled to yield by dire economic necessity. Imperialism does not realise as yet that nations that become politically self-conscious cannot be effectively crushed by force in the modern world set-up. Britain is distant from Iran but the Soviet is its next-door neighbour. Forcing Iran means only pushing it into the lap of Russia. Neither the Iranians nor any other Muslim nation is desirous of

adopting communistic ideology or the Russian pattern of life, but it is feared that imperialism by its vicious legacy would drive some Muslim countries to align themselves with Russia. It would start with trade pacts but, if continued, it would end, God knows where. A similar drama is being enacted in Egypt. Occupying by force a vital part of any country's territory against the will of the people is a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter. To insist on fulfilment of treaty obligations consented to under duress by helpless governments is an old imperialistic way of legalising adverse possessions. The British think the removal of troops from the Suez would imperil their Middle East defence and obstruct their right of way to their Eastern dominions and colonies. But don't they realise that a hostile Egypt would be a still greater danger and they would forfeit the goodwill of the entire Arab world? Not only that, the whole Muslim world would be inimical to them. They have already earned the hostility of the Arab world through their support of Israel; their insistence of sitting on Egypt would intensify it still further. The treaty on which they base their right would anyhow expire within three years. What after that? They will then have to seek the goodwill of Egypt or continue forcibly occupying Egyptian territory. If they take the latter course, the United Nations Charter shall be blown to bits, and the United Nations will go the way of its predecessor, the League of Nations, which perished because of conniving at the Japanese occupation of Manchuria and the Italian rape of Abyssinia.

Do virulent organised Communist groups or Communist political parties of any significance exist in any Muslim country? It is a misreading of the political situation to assert that they do exist as a real menace. The real fact is that quite a large number of people in these countries demand freedom from alien domination whether it is direct or indirect. Now it has become a fashion to dub anybody as a Communist who is struggling to free his country from alien exploitation. If there is a

demonstration of students or workers in Tehran to nationalise the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co., the news is flashed that the Communist incited the people or clashed with the non-Communists, although anybody acquainted with the feelings of Iranians in this dispute knows fully well that in the matter of nationalisation of the Oil Company all Iranians speak with one voice, and there is no question of any differences between Communists and non-Communists. The Iranians naturally look to some quarter for help and encouragement and when no imperialist power comes to their aid and the Russians sitting across the border pat their backs, who can accuse the Iranians of seeking assistance from Russia? As the Iranians would struggle to gain economic independence even at a considerable financial loss, so might Russia come out to offer economic assistance through technical help or trade pacts without counting the cost. If Russia can take a long-range view to win the sympathies of the Iranians, why can't the British do that? But it appears that the legacy of imperialism blurs their vision of their own enlightened self-interest. Similarly, the Egyptian nation is not Communist-minded but British imperialism is creating a situation which would compel the Egyptians to exchange their cotton with Russian ammunition, machinery and certain manufactured consumer goods.

If we turn now to the Indian sub-continent, the political situation is fraught with ominous future. The British while quitting India left it in indecent haste, mischievously giving India the right of way to the State of Jammu and Kashmir which geographically and culturally should have been naturally a part of Pakistan, when the country was partitioned on the basis of religious majorities inhabiting contiguous areas. The dispute that resulted from this mischief has brought the two countries on the verge of war, Nehru concentrating all his troops on the Pakistan borders almost within cannon range. Pakistan is still a member of the British Commonwealth; it chose to do so in preference to being left in cold isolation or aligning itself with the Communist

bloc. But when the British let four years pass without bringing effective pressure on India, people in Pakistan too began to look to Russia which touches its territory in the northern mountainous ranges. Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, the noble, wise and level-headed Premier of Pakistan, accepted an invitation from Marshal Stalin to visit Russia but wisely left the date unfixed. Before this visit could materialise, the Premier received an invitation from President Truman which he accepted without hesitation and visited the U.S.A. But even from America he could secure no effective help for Kashmir. The U.S.A. saw the justice of the Pakistan case but nothing substantial was done except keeping this vital issue only at the debating level. The U.S.A. too moves only when it feels that the step is necessary in its anti-Communist campaign. Nehru has been starving India because of spending countless millions in augmenting her military might with the primary object of retaining Kashmir by force flouting even the united verdict of the United Nations. Nehru went to the U.S.A. to beg for a million tons of wheat for his starving millions whom his political and economic bungling had reduced to such straits. When the U.S.A. wanted his alliance against Communism he flatly refused and then, like the other nations mentioned above, turned to Russia for wheat. Russia agreed promptly without attaching any conditions and the moment President Truman heard the news that a consignment of wheat from Russia is on the way to India, he, almost the next day, put his signature to the gift of a million tons of wheat to India. Pakistan naturally resented it because the money saved by Nehru, by living on charity, would be spent on guns and bullets in a possible conflict with Pakistan.

Further to the East the world is given to understand that it is the Communists who are creating all the trouble and organising armies and guerrillas against the French or the British. The fact is that it is not Communism but the urge for national independence that is at the root of these upheavals. If the imperialists stigmatise

them as Communists, the patriots begin to assume that title themselves. The Communists all over the world applaud them and the imperialists, British or French, continue to hunt them with a view to crushing the spirit of national independence and the desire for socio-economic reconstruction. What a long and bitter struggle had Indonesia to wage against Dutch imperialism! It may be claimed that the democracy-loving Allied nations ultimately freed them. But this is not the fact. It was the spirit of sacrifice of the people, fired with a righteous cause and then the danger of Communism fishing in troubled waters that ultimately crowned the nationalistic aspirations with success.

Leaving apart the countries that already formed part of the Russian empire, no Muslim country has hitherto been injured more by Communism than by European imperialism. Recently a responsible British statesman said: how could we let go Malaya? The British would sink without rubber and tin. Rubber and tin from Malaya can be got easily and cheaply by imperialistic exploitation. A free and democratic Malaya dealing freely with a free world in matters of trade might become very troublesome; the Malaysians would naturally look primarily at their own interests. There is a very large Muslim population in Malaya and on the cultural level people are not very different from the Indonesians. When Indonesia, by spilling its precious life-blood, could achieve independence, the Malaysians naturally would follow the same path. Backing wrong horses and political bungling in handling the Chinese problems pushed five hundred million people into the lap of Communism. The British in Malaya and the French in Indo-China may be heading toward the same culmination.

Our main contention is that no Muslim nation can ideologically accept the Russian type of atheistic Communism. It is true that Communism is not only a particular economic theory and practice but an all-comprehensive way of life. It starts with a metaphysics of materialism and then with a definite view of human

motivation and a particular theory of human progress, one stage following the other with an inexorable dialectic. It is claimed that in Communism all aspects of life are logically or dialectically knit together. The Muslim claims that similarly a philosophical, mental and moral unity is given to him by his faith. The Muslims everywhere individually as well as collectively fall short of the ideal but the leading men in all Muslim nations possess that faith and cherish that ideal. Islamic ideology in its broad fundamentals is broad enough to embrace within its framework all genuinely progressive movements. Islam started as a theistic socialist republic with liberty, fraternity and equality. As it believes in one God, it also believes in one world and one humanity. It contains the seeds of healthy socialism. The Muslim States at present are suffering in various degrees from monarchies, aristocracies, oligarchies and corrupt landlordism, but everywhere reformist movements are afoot. But the distinctive trait in all movements of Muslim renaissance and reform is that appeal is always made to the fundamental principles of Islam. In no Muslim country there is any ideological front created against Islam and no Muslim nation believes that Islam is an outworn creed. There may be individuals here and there who have succumbed to atheistic materialism of the West, but they are not a force to be reckoned with. Muslim countries have only two types: the liberal progressive type who believe that all life can be and ought to be moulded according to the fundamentals of Islam and many institutions have to be recast in the light of progressively advancing experience. Another section led by the old type of rigid theologians preaches that the letter of the law is as important as the spirit, and time-honoured traditions and institutions must be cherished and revived. But with all differences of interpretation both these sections believe in Islam as offering a satisfactory code of life and a soul-satisfying explanation of existence. When the Turks abolished an already moribund and defunct Caliphate and attempted to remodel

their laws and institutions to suit the needs of a modern life, the West emitted a jubilant exclamation that the Turks had renounced Islam. But the Muslim world, though critical about certain abrupt changes, was not much shaken by this cultural revolution. The Turks had really waged a war against reactionary and obscuranist Mullaism. Calling the State secular meant nothing except keeping the reactionary theologians out of the councils of national reconstruction. Offering prayers in Turkish instead of Arabic did not touch the core of Islam; on the other hand, it brought the prayerful mind nearer to God. When theology was considerably purified, the anti-theological wave passed away and to-day the Turk is perhaps more religious than many another Muslim nation, still paying lip service to an outworn theology. I had the honour of having Rauf Pasha, for some time the Premier of Turkey during the period of the Turkish Revolution, as my guest. He explained to me for hours together the motives of the Turkish Revolution. He told me that like most of the people the young revolutionary Turks believed sincerely in Islam. But as Islam had been corrupted by ignorant Mullas who poisoned Turkish national life, Islam had to be saved from its degenerate protagonists. There was no organised Church in Turkey from which the State had to be separated. Turkish secularism meant only this that national reconstruction had to be left free from corrupt theological interference.

All Muslim nations are basically religious. Not that all individuals are practising Muslims or that all life is actually moulded according to the tenets of Islam. As in any other community, there are grades of religiousness. But no Muslim nation or no substantial section of any Muslim nation dreams of changing Islam for Communism. Every Muslim nation is trying to reform itself keeping before its eyes the ideals of Islam. Authority for all change is sought and found within the teachings of Islam itself. The remnants of European imperialism are driving some of the Muslim peoples to

look to Russia for help and sympathy, which is mostly political in nature.

Besides the fight against the remnants of imperialism there is another factor in the social unrest which makes some workers and peasants look to Russia offering a pattern to be imitated. Muslim countries are not yet industrialised, so there is no considerable industrial proletariat in any Muslim country. The chief problem in all Asia is the agrarian problem. In many places the peasantry is suppressed and exploited. The peasants want to do away with do-nothing absentee landlords, building palatial villas and riding ostentatious limousines in the cities, living luxuriously on the fruits of the labour of the poor sweating peasant whose standard of living is miserably low because he is compelled to part with a considerable portion of his harvest to satisfy the demands of an exacting landlord. A general struggle for political independence combined with democratic and socialistic ideas which form essential elements of unrest everywhere in a world in the throes of change have made the quiescent peasantry, hitherto resigned to fate, conscious of certain fundamental human rights. In a world made one and made small by rapid communication, by instantaneous global broadcasting of ideas and movements, even the illiterate peasant understands to some extent the happenings in the wide world and tries to grasp their significance. Besides, he does not watch these movements as a passive spectator; he is directly or indirectly affected by events in remote corners of the world about whose geographical location he has not the faintest idea. When cotton prices suddenly shoot up he wants to know why, and some newspaper reader or radio listener tells him that it is the result of the Korean War which threatens to drag the entire world into a global conflict and nations are trying to hoard essential raw materials. Factory workers, though small in numbers, in predominantly agricultural countries learn, without reading themselves, of strikes organised by trade unions in advanced countries. Then

these methods are tried and found to produce results in better wages and other amenities. These methods were not invented by Russian Communism or the German or Italian type of Fascism; they were developed in quite respectable, unrevolutionary, stable democracies. Muslim countries, in the main undisturbed by Communism, are not unaffected by these modes of action. It cannot be denied that injustice to the worker did not originate with industrial capitalism; the worker in the agrarian civilisation, the actual tiller of the soil, has been maltreated for long centuries, working as a slave or a serf, a poorly rewarded tenant, or a landless worker on the soil. Now having been made conscious of his rights and his human dignity he demands that justice be done to him. But no peasant wants Communism; he only demands proprietorship to the extent that he and his family till the soil and are not robbed of the fruits of their labour. He is prepared to pay reasonable dues to the State but he wants no intermediary exploiter between the State and himself. The workers in the factories too demand a living wage, a limitation of the factory-owners' profits or shareholders' dividends. The workers and peasants are everywhere more or less disgruntled and their struggle for elementary rights is not always unjustified.

But it is the game of the Communist to exploit political, social or economic discontent. He joins the reformers and speaks with a more passionate voice. He does not let the peasant and worker know that the Communist ideology discountenances all reform, and its real creed is that because the old world cannot be mended, it must be ended to raise a new structure of humanity from foundations upwards. His chief pleasure lies in creating chaos and collapse. It is about this type of a pretender-reformer that the Holy Qur'an says in the very first chapter: 'When it is said to them don't create mischief and confusion among the people, they reply: we are verily only reformers.' There is no doubt that everywhere there is room for reform and

some radical evils require radical remedies. It is also true that the tempo of life has increased and life to-day has to be different from what it was yesterday. It is also true that all ancient institutions require remodelling. In the words of Tennyson, 'the old order must change lest one good custom should corrupt the world'. Nations that do not read the writing on the wall and refuse to move in unison with the spirit of the times shall be left behind in the race of time. In the desire to hold on to certain old views and ways they may be hugging only a corpse.

There is another source of great danger developing in the Muslim countries. Undergraduates are swarming in colleges and universities, hungry for diplomas and degrees with a view to getting employment in the higher scales of government service. The State under the present conditions can employ only a small proportion of the graduates; the rest wander from pillar to post in search of employment. Liberal education has not equipped them for any special task, and many of them have not profited from even the general education that they have received. This unemployed and unemployable intelligentsia is the most disgruntled and most dangerous class of have-nots who become desperate and desire to subvert the established order. They have heard that in Russia there is no unemployment and therefore they begin to preach Communism and become ringleaders in all disturbances and demonstrations. The Muslim States that are rapidly expanding education in every direction have to tackle this problem with much greater seriousness than has hitherto been the case. Every unemployed graduate is a potential Communist. This is a small section but it consists of men with a little knowledge which is a very dangerous thing. Then this class is exceptionally vocal and vociferous. There are some among them who can write good prose and good verse. Articles and short stories and poems produced by this class are read widely by the literate public. Some of them can even quote Scripture to enlist the aid of revered authority. Communist literature is imported from Russia and

propagated by them. All Muslim nations are now challenged and this challenge can be met successfully only in two ways: by a progressive and liberal interpretation of Islam and by painting a true and total picture of Russian Communism which aims at destroying religion and individual liberty.

Communism and Iqbal

AS Pakistan is the largest Muslim State in the world, so Iqbal, the ideological founder of this State, is admittedly the greatest philosopher-poet and the most outstanding Muslim ideologist of modern times. He had received both Oriental and Occidental education having sat at the feet of great Muslim savants and Western thinkers imbibing and assimilating all that the wisdom of ages had to offer and then attempting the synthesis of all values, resulting in the creation of fresh ones. He expressed himself profusely in Urdu and Persian verse leaving only a few prose writings. Among his English prose writings his *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Oxford University Press) has already become a classic. Although his chief strength lay in his poetic genius, he combined exquisite poetic skill with the dialectic of the philosopher and the vision of the sage, to which was added an irrepressible life-urge to enrich the spiritual values of mankind, freeing modern humanity from the prison-house of materialism. He appreciated fully the value of scientific rationalism but was extremely critical of the narrowness of its vision which took the world of the senses not only as a primary but as the total reality. He was a Muslim, philosophically and intuitionally convinced of the validity of eternal values embodied in the teachings of Islam. He was convinced that, although the Muslim nations had fallen and become enslaved everywhere by Western imperialistic domination and have been by-passed by modern scientific and industrial development, yet this is a passing phase in the movement of a culture which has a

transforming mission for humanity. Nietzsche talked about the reevaluation of all values but could go no further than a scathing criticism of the life-negating trends of Christian asceticism and the intellectualism of the Greeks. Nietzsche was an adept in the smashing of idols but for the worshipping humanity he could present nothing better than the idea of a superman whose chief characteristic is the love of power for its own sake. His concept of the creation of a better and stronger species to replace the present homosapients was a variation of the Darwinian hypothesis of the struggle for existence as the chief instrument of the advancement of life. Iqbal had considerable admiration for the bold iconoclasm of Nietzsche but was sorry that this enthusiast of total reevaluation could not advance beyond a negative attitude.

Iqbal too, as a Muslim, was an iconoclast. Bacon had depicted humanity as congenitally idolatrous and had exhorted human beings to break the shackles of these various idolatries so that only the God of reason revealed in Nature and logic may be worshipped. Iqbal attacked the idols that were set up by the West during the last two centuries; nor did he spare the idols that the pseudo-religious and the comparatively stagnant East had been worshipping for centuries. For him life was nothing but an infinitely creative urge whose essence is self-amelioration. Its enrichment is not the result of passive adaptation and mechanical adjustment merely in the interest of a static self-preservation.

As a Muslim, Iqbal was a monotheist but his concept of God was moulded by his concept of the nature of ultimate reality. God, for him, was not a static absolute but a dynamic creative urge who may be considered as a cosmic person or a universal ego. He did not create the universe by a single fiat of will and then began to contemplate His handiwork as good in every respect. God is perpetually creative. Iqbal agreed with Nietzsche that creeds may be classified as *Welt-bejahende und Welt-beneinende religionen*, those that say 'Yes' to life and those that say 'No' to life. Iqbal had no doubt in his

mind that Islam is a creed that says 'Yes' to life; asceticism as well as materialism are false because they are cramping. Islam is neither ascetic nor materialistic. It recognises the relative reality of matter, body, mind and spirit, considering them real aspects of one ultimate reality which is more akin to spirit than to matter and which is both transcendent and immanent in all its infinite manifestations.

Iqbal has left hardly any accepted value of life uncriticised although as a lover of universal life he has love and appreciation for every aspect of it, provided any one aspect is not taken as the totality of reality. ✓He exhorted Muslims to undertake the study of Nature] in order to subdue its immense powers to life-purposes. But the study of phenomenal nature, cut adrift from deeper life-intuitions that are of a noumenal and spiritual nature, leads to meaningless pursuit of power which first ignores and then destroys human and divine values. During the last two centuries or so Europe entered on this one-sided development with the result that it sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind. Reason was identified with scientific inductions only dealing with the physical and mathematical aspects of reality. Materialism as a method of the study of physical nature has been fruitful of results and will continue to be fruitful in the understanding of natural causation or phenomenal uniformities. It becomes harmful only when it begins to set itself up as ontology or metaphysics pretending to give us the essence of all existence.

Scientific materialism in the West led to economic materialism. When matter was taken as the ultimate reality, naturally the production and distribution of material commodities became the be-all and the end-all of existence. Physical comforts or material standards of living became the sole criterion of culture. In this process wealth accumulated but humanity began to decay. With materialism as the ideological background economic development became the sole goal of life. The demand for markets resulted in virulent national

rivalries. Humanity was split up into hostile national groups, red in tooth and claw, to snatch as much as they could by force. Applied science and increasing efficiency in organisation became formidable instruments of exploitation. Knowledge was used mainly to improve the art of killing. Science saved life in the retail but destroyed it in the wholesale. Greatness of nations was judged by their power of defence and offence.

As nations in the West had augmented their power by developing national independent units, Iqbal in his early groping years started paying homage to secular or territorial nationalism. The British imperialistic grip on India had to be loosened before Muslims as well as other communities of the multi-national Indian sub-continent could breathe freely and become the architects of their own destiny. Iqbal wrote soul-stirring national songs exhorting people to love their homeland and free it from their unsympathetic and alien rulers. At that stage he considered secular territorial nationalism to be the only means of achieving political liberty. But even during this period his love of Islam was unabated. There were two currents in his soul sometimes running parallel, at other times crossing each other and mingling their waters in whirlpools. But after his return from Europe his entire vision was changed. He was convinced that Western materialism, industrialism and imperialism were heading for ruin, rushing resistlessly towards a cataclysm. The big powers were bound to destroy themselves in an Armageddon; maybe smaller and weaker nations would have a better chance of survival. He began to cry out this belief when European industrial production and European imperialism were at the height of their glory and it looked as if after partitioning the world, they would find out ways and means of dividing the spoils, and keeping the backward nations in eternal subjection.

∫ The European civilisation received a rude shock during and after World War I. To win a total war the exploiting nations began to preach hypocritically the virtues

of democracy in which all the nations of the world, great and small, the victors and the vanquished, the hitherto oppressors and the oppressed, must all share equally. The European nations, with their tongues in their cheeks, paid lip homage to the professorial idealism of President Wilson. When great hopes were raised by setting up an international forum in the form of the League of Nations some were deceived by others and the others were self-deceived. Iqbal was one of the great thinkers who exposed the farce of this League. He said that in the nature of things a League of Nations cannot create international amity or justice. Reason or justice can become possible where the contestants or disputants believe in a common ideal. But the cult of Western nationalism had set up separate jealous gods for different groups of votaries. Everyone came to this League to retain what he had grabbed or to grab something more under deceptive names like mandates. Mandates were bestowed on one another as if they were Christmas presents. Iqbal said, it was like 'coffin-thieves' allocating graves, attempting an equitable division. The Western soul had become so saturated with the cult of racial, linguistic or territorial nationalism that the coming together of their representatives could never achieve any justice objectively. The League of Nations was not a League of Humanity.

Iqbal chose verse as a vehicle of his thought and his mission, not only because he was a gifted poet capable of expressing himself more emphatically and more effectively through poetry, but also because he was conscious of this special trait of his nation that verse stirs it much more deeply than prose and has a much wider emotional appeal. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, the great thinker-reformer of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, was a master of lucid prose but could not write poetry. He made up this deficiency by converting a great poet Hali to his mission and letting him work as his *alter ego* to stir the nation through verse. Sayyid Ahmad is said to have been so enthused by this achievement that

he remarked, if God Almighty, on the Day of Judgement, asked him as to what great meritorious deed he had to offer, he would reply that he made Hali write his great poem. How true is the thought expressed in the desire, 'Let me write a nation's songs and I would not care who makes its laws'! When a foreigner comes to know how Iqbal's thoughts and attitudes have stirred a whole nation to its depths and been instrumental in the creation of a great State he looks for his speeches and prose writings, his essays, orations and dissertations. He is surprised when he is told that almost all that he said, or the most effective part of it, is embodied in his lyrics and philosophical poems. The modern world is a seething cauldron of clashing ideologies and conflicting vested interests. The modern man is torn from within and pulled and pushed in all directions by traditions and forces of the past and the present and the visions of an unrealised future. Iqbal's soul vibrated to the touch of every powerful idea. He succumbed now and then to the charm even of antagonistic forces. Emerson has given it as the sign of a great genius that he is a great assimilator and is not afraid of apparent contradictions like little minds. He seems to be constantly struggling to achieve a synthesis of the opposites. It is an extraordinary mind which can appreciate the atheistic Nietzsche and the theistic mystic Rumi at the same time. He is conscious of the great spiritual heritage of the past but refuses to be tied down to it in its worn-out forms. He believes that creeds and systems come and go and this is the destiny of everything that life throws up in its forward movement but he is at the same time firmly convinced that life has its eternal verities that abide in all the changes.

We cannot deal with the wide range of his thoughts and influence in this short chapter; as the book is concerned with a comparative study of Islam and Communism, we shall have to confine ourselves within this topic.

Iqbal judged Communism as a product of Western materialism and capitalism. It is the *reductio ad absurdum*

of the Western sensate civilisation. He was, however, not an out and out adverse critic. He saw the justification of it in the dialectic of history. Iqbal, as a Muslim monotheist, was happy at the smashing of all idols and false gods. As already stated, his appreciation of Nietzsche too was based on this iconoclasm. Dogmatic and Church Christianity had deviated from the original teachings of Christ and had become an ally of profane and mundane powers; it had ceased to be an edifying influence except in the lives of a few individuals here and there. Religion had become the opium of the ignorant masses by becoming an ally of feudalism, capitalism and absolute monarchy. The Russian Orthodox Church was in the worst state in this respect: Iqbal looked at Communism as a storm that sweeps away all the foul airs in the atmosphere. The *laissez-faire* capitalism of the industrial West had pulverised humanity into hostile national groups and within every nation too there was class-war because the classes of haves and have-nots were at loggerheads. His own country was predominantly an agricultural country where no industrial proletariat had developed but the conflict of the landlord and the tenant was becoming an acute socio-economic problem. The tiller of the soil, an honest, industrious and healthy lot, was ground down between many millstones. The land revenue collected by the State was the least burdensome, but the tiller of the soil delivered in many cases more than half the produce of his labour to the landlord who had come into possession of large tracts of land generally through immoral means. The usurious money-lender was even more callous than the landlord. Through usury and judicial support of the system set up by the British, in complete disregard of local traditions, the ownership of land was rapidly passing into the hands of money-lending owners, who did nothing to improve the soil or the condition of the tiller. Iqbal would welcome a revolution in which the do-nothing absentee landlord or the usurious money-lender is swept away. He did not propound any definite scheme

of agrarian reform but he turned the attention of the nation to this gross injustice which the laws of the land and even the laws having the sanctity of religious orthodoxy were trying to uphold and perpetuate. But Iqbal was too much of an individualist to approve any scheme of reform that would submerge the individual in an impersonal totalitarian system. He wanted a change from shameless exploitation to social justice in which the actual worker is able to enjoy the fruits of his labour. Let us attempt a free translation of some of his verses. Addressing the Punjabi peasant he exhorts him to break his shackles and realise his own value and dignity:

O peasant of the Punjab!
 What is the secret of thy life?
 For millenniums thou hast played with dust;
 The spark of thy life is smothered by this dust;
 Wake up now, the Muezzin calls, the day has dawned, arise
 Within thy dust; thou hast found no spring of life.
 That jewel of thyself is false which scintillates not with the rays
 of dignity. Realise thy self.
 Break down the idols of tribes and classes
 And smash the chains of ancient custom.
 Have faith in thyself as a votary of one God.
 This is the right faith that opens the vistas of life.
 Sow a seed of self-realisation in thy soil: it is this seed that
 bears eternal fruit.

There is a poem of Iqbal which is fired with an impassioned appeal to subvert the present unjust order. He desired the exploited masses to realise their own dignity and power and make a supreme effort to right the wrongs inflicted on them through the ages. He prays to God to command His angels to rouse the masses. If Iqbal had not written much else to clarify his attitude towards Marxism one would take him to be a banner-bearer of a proletarian revolt and inciter to class-hatred. This poem need not be interpreted as advocating the theory and practice of Russian Communism; it is a cry against the injustices of the present social order which, according to Iqbal, needs a radical remedy. Let us give

a free rendering of a few verses before any further comment on them:

GOD COMMANDS THE ANGELS

Rise and arouse the poverty-stricken,
 And shake the foundations of the palaces of the rich.
 Warm up the blood of the slaves with the fire of faith
 And make the sparrow dare to fight the eagle.
 The time of the sovereignty of the masses has arrived;
 Wipe away all traces of ancient laws and customs.
 Reduce to ashes all the harvest
 From which the tiller gets no grain to eat.
 Then turn to the priests and remove them from the Church;
 For they stand as iron walls between God and man.
 Put out the lights in all the temples and the mosques
 For there they try to deceive
 God and the idols, by prostrations and circumlocutions.
 I am sick of the false glory of these marble temples;
 Erect for me a temple made of clay.

Iqbal felt deeply that the masses are oppressed and depressed but his diagnosis is that humanity has been alienated from spiritual values. The remedy is not to snatch by force what the others have taken away by force; blood cannot be washed with blood. He desires the masses and the classes to become God-conscious and not class-conscious. Materialism has distorted man's sense of values. Economic ills are not the causes but the effects of a wrong outlook on life. Unless there is an ethics at the back of economics and a spiritual view of life at the back of mere morality and legality, no change of systems can pull out humanity from the mire of despond in which it is stuck up. Life must be identified not with economics but with a sense of human dignity rooted in divinity. But according to Iqbal Communism has shaken the old world and compelled it to revise its values. Communists are the shakers of humanity but not the makers of it, though the demolition of the old structure is a necessary preliminary to erecting a structure on a new plan. Iqbal was fond of quoting the famous line of Rumi that destruction is a necessary step in construction. He was pleased that Communism had exposed the

hypocrisies of the established orders, religious as well as secular. The slogans of liberty, fraternity and equality camouflaged the instruments of exploitation and tyranny. Liberty had been exploited by *laissez-faire* capitalism leaving to the have-nots the liberty to starve; equality of opportunity and equality before law as well as the equality of franchise had in practice become a farce. These slogans were invented not by the love of humanity but the urge of greed. In the Communist criticism levelled at the old order there was much truth and that truth was appreciated by Iqbal, but in the suggestion of remedies he was poles apart from Communism. In his collection *Bal-i-Jabril* (Gabriel's Wings) Iqbal chose a novel mode of the justification of the Communistic revolt. The God-denying Lenin finds himself in the presence of God in the next world. He justifies his atheism while he was on the earth in the following statement:

O God, now I see that Thy signs are manifest in the Realm of Nature and the Realm of Souls. I wanted to understand Thee through reason alone but how changing and shifting was all speculation about Thee. Those who studied the motions of the stars or the growth of plants had no ear for the eternal harmonies of creation. Sense and science were alien to any spiritual experience. Now that I am face to face with divine realities and perception has taken the place of speculation, I feel now that that realm is real which I considered to be a concoction of the Church. I seek the permission to ask a question that was a thorn in my side all the time I lived on Thy earth. Who and where is the Adam by whom Thou art worshipped; is it the Adam living on the earth? I found the East worshipping the white masters of the West and I found the West worshipping the glittering gold. I found Thy votaries neither here nor there. I found in the West much light of knowledge and skill but this light was darkness without a fount of light. Wast Thou worshipped in temples? Surely not, because I found the bank more glorious than the Church. Trade was indistinguishable from gambling, one usurer making millions bankrupt. Knowledge, science, statesmanship and state, all taught equality but sucked the blood of mankind. Unemployment, shamelessness, nakedness, drunkenness and poverty—these were the triumphs of Western culture. To the nations that are bereft of heavenly grace, controls of steam and electricity are the heights of perfection. Machines crush the human spirit and denude it of all magnanimity. I see that Destiny is now going to frustrate all vile plans. In the twilight of civilisation there

is an artificial glow; the colour on the cheeks is rouge or wine-induced. The tavern-keepers fear that the old tavern is going to collapse. Thou art Almighty and Just, but how bitter is the life of the worker in Thy world! When shall the boat of exploiting capitalism sink; the world awaits with impatience the day of retribution.

This appears to be the cry and the creed of the Marxist revolutionary, but Iqbal obviously was not one. He was a believer in God and makes Lenin face the Lord in the next world. The picture of the modern civilised world that Iqbal has painted and the description given through the mouth of Lenin are meant to be objective and realistic. There is no doubt that in this scathing condemnation, Iqbal has completely identified himself with Lenin. The chief fallacy of Marxism does not lie in its pointing towards the evils of exploitation. An idealist, a spiritualist, a saint, a prophet, a reformer and anyone with a zeal for social justice should subscribe to whatever is said about social injustices and hypocrisies that are rooted in the old order or the contemporary situation. The symptoms are there to observe and to condemn; so far there is agreement. But when it comes to the seeking of causes and cures, then a believer in God diverges from the believer in matter only. The Marxist says that the whole malady is caused by outmoded ways of production and distribution of material commodities, but Marxism proposes that a further step in materialism would cure all diseases. Iqbal is one with all genuinely religious and idealistic thinkers in believing that nothing can be altered for the better unless men regain the vision of the spirit. One has to realise the solidarity of humanity based on the essential unity and loving providence of God to achieve real unity, liberty, fraternity and equality. Without that vision all these concepts become empty of any real content and are reduced to self-deceiving and world-deceiving slogans. In one of his verses Iqbal remarks about Marx that he has in his mind the 'equality of human stomach' and not the unity and dignity of the human spirit. Marx said that a totalitarian mode of production

and distribution would bring about the millennium, but Muslims, Christians and all theists think otherwise: only divine and human love can usher the Kingdom of Heaven. The Communist manifesto incites people to class-war and violence. Iqbal exhorts them to intensify universal love which creates right vision as well as right action. Let us give a gist of the Song of the Angels:

Reason is unbridled and love knows not its place in life; O, the Eternal Shaper of things, man's picture is as yet unfinished. The rakes, the theologians, the masters and the pseudo-saints—they are all preying on humanity; the rotations of days and nights have brought no change. O Lord, Thy rich are intoxicated with wealth and Thy saints enjoy their psychical states. Thy poor wander as tramps while masters sit in high mansions. Science and religion, knowledge and skill all subserve transient desires of the senses. Thy love that unties all knots has not become common. Love is the essence of life and self-realisation the essence of love; alas this sword of love that cuts all knots is still lying in its scabbard!

This is the difference between Marx and Iqbal; both are out for a revolution but one wants to achieve it through hatred and the other through love. One says: Arise, the workers of the world, to shatter this sorry scheme of things because you are not getting proper wages and surplus value is gathered by the employers. Iqbal says, Arise, ye the rich and the poor alike, and realise your real selves through love; increase of hatred and class-war can destroy much but is incapable of creating a fraternal world; only love is creative.

Iqbal points out the evils of landlordism and capitalism with as much emphasis as any Marxist could command. In all agricultural and unindustrialised countries the chief socio-economic problem is the agrarian problem. Iqbal had seen the havoc done by usury and landlordism in his own homeland, and like all socialists he had come to the conclusion that unrestricted ownership of land and uncontrolled *laissez-faire* capitalism had made large masses of humanity dependent and indigent. In many places he quotes the Qur'anic verse that land belongs to God; it was not created by human effort, and it becomes productive mainly through natural forces

assisted to some extent by human labour. With respect to land it is God above and the actual tiller below, the sweat of whose labour is added to the God-created water that irrigates it. Where from does the owner come in? He is generally an interloper who gained his title through exploitation, cunning or other unfair means. This theme often recurs in Iqbal. Here is a free rendering of a short poem:

Who nurtures the seed in the dark womb of the earth,
Who makes the winds drive the monsoon from the West,
Who made the earth and the heat and light of the sun,
Who fills the pocket of the ear with pearls of corn,
And who is it who makes the seasons rotate?
This land is not thine, not thine, O landlord,
Nor did it belong to thy forefathers;
It is not thine, nor is it mine.

Iqbal was not a practical planner. In his homeland there was a great pressure of population on limited areas of arable land. More than eighty per cent of population directly or indirectly derives its living from land. He felt passionately that agrarian reform was needed in many directions. The usurer had to be eliminated and agricultural credit to be established on humanitarian basis. Fragmentation of land though being parcelled out by inheritance had to be set right. The absentee landlord who did nothing for the improvement of the land and spent his unearned wealth in ostentation and degenerating luxuries corrupting the social, economic and political life of the State had to be drastically controlled. Iqbal as a philosopher and moralist planned no remedies in detail and inculcated only broad principles of social justice to be implemented by practical reformers. Iqbal's influence on his nation is great. The ideas that he propounded are slowly but steadily taking a hand in the shaping of things, and it is certain that Iqbal would continue to inspire and accompany future progress towards more and more social justice and Islamisation of the institutions of Pakistan.

When Iqbal appreciates or depreciates any movement or system, he does so from the standpoint of an ideal

Islamic society. He does not pretend to believe that it exists anywhere at present. He is as severely critical of his own existing society as he is of Western civilisation. As Socrates called himself the gadfly of Athens, Iqbal was the gadfly of the Muslim world. Himself a profoundly religious man, he was disgusted with the religiosity of the East which had degenerated into external observances of ritual and a worship of the letter without spirit. He wanted Muslim society to be a democratic republican society without monarchs, without capitalists, without landlords and without priests. He was enraged against those who posed as priests and spiritual guides and he would be the last person to hand over a State even to a Muslim theocracy. He wanted a free and full development of all aspects of human life, but society must be moulded and guided by men of God who do not follow religion merely as a profession. Plato's pattern of an ideal society and State was only a Utopian pattern which Socrates called a pattern in the heaven. But in the mind of Iqbal there was a pattern that had been once realised on earth in the form of a God-fearing society which was organised into a Welfare State by the Prophet of Islam. Iqbal realised fully well that ancient society could not be revived in its entirety; history does not repeat itself in the same way. He wanted the original spirit of Islam to create new modes of culture without losing its self-identity. He welcomed even the impact of Communism on the entire world including Muslimdom but, as already stated, he welcomed it as an essential but a negative phase. Neither the methods nor the goals of Russian Communism could evoke any sympathetic echoes in his mind, but he was happy that Communism had awakened the human spirit from its dogmatic slumber and compelled it to recast its time-honoured and creed-sanctioned systems. It was an essential principle stated in the Qur'an that natural and acquired wealth must circulate in the entire body politic so that some parts do not suffer from plethora and others from atrophy. Scientific technology had created immense

wealth and imperialistic exploitation has augmented it to astronomical proportions. But capitalism was burning away its surpluses instead of spreading them over needy humanity. A million shirts were unsold while a million backs were bare. Crops were being destroyed by State sanction and State subsidy and shiploads of food were being drowned in the sea. Marxism had predicted the chaos and collapse of this system and turned the attention of humanity towards an urgent need for change. Iqbal acknowledges this service rendered by Communism to humanity. Here are a few of his verses about this theme in a free rendering:

The new trends in the nations of the world reveal to me that the Russian Revolution has not been without some gain. Minds everywhere have been compelled to think more boldly and the world is becoming sick of outworn creeds. Realities hitherto concealed by the greed of man are becoming gradually patent and manifest. The Qur'an had taught that all surpluses must return to society for the general well-being. Maybe the Muslim too may now begin to understand this verse and dive deeper into the meaning of the Qur'an and recast his conduct in a new moulder.

According to Iqbal, life in the East as well as in the West had become spiritually degenerate and corrupt. The West was proud of its science but science had replaced religion by atheistic materialism. The West had created nationalism which had taken back humanity to the old tribal stage when each tribe was actually or potentially hostile to every other tribe. Democracy was mere hypocrisy and camouflage wherein men are counted and not weighed, the sage and the sinner, the wise and the fool having an equal right to determine the vital problems of life. Iqbal wanted a system in which the good, the just and the wise should inspire and direct society to realise supra-physical aims and not make the production and distribution of commodities as the goal of life. But these elites he did not find either in religion or in politics; politics was Machiavellian and religion had become the opium of the people. Iqbal warned the Muslims not to imitate Western nationalism or Western

democracy. Islam had already achieved to a considerable extent a distinctive culture, which with all its drawbacks and set-backs had at least retained this value that it is supra-racial. Imitation of European racial or territorial nationalism would certainly be a retrograde step and Islam would forget its essential mission if it is lured by this centrifugal tendency. Inspired by the Islamic doctrine of divine unity, Iqbal aimed at one world and one humanity and desired the Muslims to set an example to the rest of the world. Iqbal did not believe much in the exclusive efficacy of any particular social or political system. It is not the system but the vision and character of men that counts. He was out for changing men more than changing systems, although he preferred some systems to others as offering better chances of self-realisation for human beings. He repudiated monarchy as original Islam had done, although he offered unstinted praise to a pious and just monarch, and he would every time prefer a spiritually-minded king to a corrupt democracy which he had studied in the West and whose abortive imitation he abhorred in his own country.]

Iqbal had no clear-cut scheme of social organisation but he definitely willed to guard against those forces which create privileged and unprivileged classes with a gulf between the haves and the have-nots. His ideals in this respect were based on Islamic ideology which allows maximum freedom of conscience and an open field for the choice of ways of life to individuals as well as groups within a nation. In so far as Muslim society is concerned, he definitely demanded that it be reconstructed on the lines of Islamic socialism which allows freedom of initiative with collective planning. The task of combining individual liberty with social welfare is a continuing task which every nation and every epoch has to face and discover new modes of adjustment. Islam at its advent solved it in one way but the Islam of to-day has to face novel and complicated situations. The detailed repetition of an old pattern is neither practicable nor desirable, but the spirit of Islam can create new forms in

every age. Iqbal is confident that Islam could create an economic and political democracy as it has succeeded through the ages in creating a social democracy which transcends races, tribes, nations and complexions. The revolution that is needed is not only a redistribution of commodities. Equality of material goods would effect no essential transformation in the human soul. Iqbal was a staunch believer in the Qur'anic thesis that no effective change takes place in the nations unless there is a psychical transformation, a change of heart which originates and motivates it. This change of heart can take place only by a revaluation of values, by giving priority to spiritual values, from which healthy material readjustment would follow as a necessary consequence. His main criticism of Marxism is centred on this that it equated all life with economics as if security about food and shelter has been the only guiding element in all human history. Marx and Lenin considered all values of art, knowledge and religion as by-products. Nietzsche conceived of the supersession and transcendence of present-day humanity in purely biological terms and Marx substituted economics for biology, but this economics too is based only on animal instincts. The demand of Marx for the establishment of a classless society was right but his great blunder was that he considered economic equality to be fundamental. Spirit or soul or love is not found in the Marxist vocabulary. There is a short poem on 'Communism and Imperialism' in Iqbal's *Javid Nama*. Here is a rendering of a few verses:

The author of *Das Kapital* is of the race of Abraham which produced so many prophets; he too is a prophet but without the Holy Ghost (Gabriel). In his falsehood too there is some truth concealed; his heart believes but his head is an infidel (he desires human welfare but his concepts lead him astray). This fault is not peculiar to him. The Westerners have lost the vision of Heaven. Their theories as well as practices are earth-rooted; they all search for the soul of man in his stomach. Communism is concerned only with the body of man but a well-fed and well-clothed body does not necessarily embellish the soul. The creed of this undiscerning prophet saw not the light of truth and based his religion on the equality

of the stomachs. The feeling of fraternity is born only out of a spiritual attitude; its roots are not found in the earth or in the bodies of men. But imperialism which tries to fortify itself against Marxism is no better in this respect. Its creed also is nothing but greed. Communism proposes to feed everyone and feels no need to go beyond the physical self because, according to its philosophy, supra-sensible realities do not exist. Imperialism too believes in the body only and plans to fatten itself on the bodies of others. It sucks the honey out of the flowers that bloom in others' gardens; it is a soul-sucker of humanity though apparently it leaves the bodies of the exploited miserably alive. It extracts the marrow and leaves the husk. Both Communism and imperialism are greedy and restless for material gain; both of them are Godless, both of them deceive humanity. One preaches revolt and the other demands tribute; between these two millstones humanity is ground down to dust. Communism robs humanity of true knowledge and faith, imperialism drains away its life and takes away its bread. I saw both submerged in the world of matter; their bodies are enlightened with physical knowledge but their souls are benighted. Life is both self-abnegation and self-realisation; it is the effort to plant a soul in inert clay.

Iqbal wrote a book of verse on self-realisation (*Asrar-i-Khudi*) followed by a book on self-abnegation (*Ramuz-i-Bekhudi*). He was a staunch believer in individuality and individual liberty but he was at the same time a Muslim socialist for whom the self-centred egoistic individualism of Nietzsche and Marx would not avail. Life is a perpetual effort at a creative synthesis out of apparent contradictions. He believed in Islam because Islam had pointed the way towards this fundamental truth of life relating the world to God, the body to spirit, the particular to the universal, the individual to society, without destroying the distinctive value of any component. All aspects of life are to be harmonised and none of them to be ignored or suppressed. Iqbal would not countenance a regime in which individual liberties are completely suppressed by force and violence in the interest of a power-intoxicated group which attempts to enforce its own ideology by violence and terror. Religious freedom is one of the fundamental tenets of Islam which means freedom to think and to act as one pleases, provided this liberty does not degenerate into licence, snapping the essential bonds of the social order. Communism denies this freedom

to individuals, hence no Muslim can ever live a genuine Muslim life under a Communistic regime. Communism would allow him the freedom of worship which is an illusory freedom and deny him all other freedoms. Iqbal wrote with comparative freedom when the Indian sub-continent was groaning under a well-organised and well-fortified imperialism. He could do so because imperialism, with all its greed and callous exploitation, left a large margin for purely ideological freedom. It allowed adverse criticism against itself so long as it remained only at the academic level, considering it to be a harmless, intellectual luxury of a small group. Communism, in comparison, is too gagging and strangling; it would not allow the heart to emit even a faint cry of pain. No Iqbal would be allowed to exist and flourish under Communism.

As has become evident in the few quotations given above, statements taken in isolation could be quoted by the Communists in their support and Iqbal was for a time thus exploited by a small batch of pseudo-intellectual Muslim Communists in Pakistan. But gradually they have awakened to the reality that Iqbal is the greatest obstacle towards the establishment of Communism in any Muslim country where he is read and understood. Iqbal is a representative Muslim thinker and he may be taken as a harbinger of Muslim renaissance. If a Muslim society is engulfed by Communist Russia, as large Muslim populations that were already parts of the Czarist empire had the misfortune to be victimised by this colossus, Islam would be gradually swept away or starved out because the totalitarian State holds the strings of all private as well as public life. Direct persecution would cease after all the nonconformists are liquidated. The new generation is receiving only atheistic education and is being thoroughly conditioned. The children will hear no voices that would contradict what they learn in compulsory schools. Religious propaganda is prohibited, religious education cannot be imparted in any private or public school. I asked a Muslim vice-chancellor

of a Central Asian Communist Soviet about the state of religion in his Muslim territory and he replied that the elders still go to the mosque to pray. When I asked about the rising generation his reply was only a significant smile.

The Muslim world everywhere is in the throes of change. There is struggle against the remnants of Western imperialism which is taking the shape of resurgent nationalism and there are movements of social and economic reform. But the Muslims are dimly conscious of a way of life distinct from the alien models that are placed before them. The belief is also firmly rooted in their mind that Islam has a definite mission for creating one world and one humanity, not through fanatical violence but through the extension of liberty and fraternity irrespective of race or creed. There are ripples of the Communist movement in a number of Muslim countries but they are mostly reactions against Western imperialism or internal exploitation from which they are struggling to free themselves. It is basically hatred of alien yokes more than any conviction about the superiority of Communism to Islam. The intellectuals in every Muslim country really desire to have more social justice and more of science and technology to develop their natural resources. They want not Communism but socialism of the Islamic pattern with a background of spiritual values. No Muslim society is prepared to replace God with dialectical or historical materialism. In Pakistan Iqbal was the greatest exponent of the spirit of Islam which he identified with life-enhancing and creative love and he is at the same time the strongest bulwark against atheistic Communism. A small group of literary Communists is planning steadily and surreptitiously to sabotage the influence of Iqbalism, but so far as Iqbal's own country is concerned they have little chance of success.

Islamic Democracy

THE concept of democracy has been appropriated by all sorts of ideologies even by those that flatly contradict one another. Britain, the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union, proceeding on different lines to approach different ideals, all pay homage to democracy. Under such confusing circumstances merely the use of this term by any system does not lead one anywhere. One is compelled to follow the Socratic method of first defining the concept before proceeding any further to debate about it. Islam too claims to offer an idea of democracy; let us analyse closely as to what Islam means by it.

Islamic democracy starts with the conviction of the basic unity of all humanity. The Qur'an has repeated this conviction in many places.

O people! be careful of (your duty to) your Lord Who created you from a single being (iv. 1).

(All) people are a single nation; so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners (ii. 213).

The Prophet also uttered this conviction on various occasions and he moulded his attitudes, laws and practices on this outlook. He taught that the division of humanity into races, tribes and nations ought not to detract from its fundamental oneness. All humanity, according to Islam, has a common origin, so they should all strive to act on universal and objective truths. There is doubtless much diversity and relativity but all diversity is only superficial and phenomenal. The variety of colours and languages enriches life and hence belongs to what in the Qur'anic terminology is called the signs of Allah. Life does not create any two individual alike

but there are super-individual unities and uniformities that form the support and essence of all existence. All human beings must have certain natural rights and natural duties which are common to them. Islam strove successfully against racialism and tribalism. There is no other example in history in which a great reformer and leader leads his nation to great victories but at the height of his triumph and the successful termination of his mission warns his people that the Arabs as a nation have no superiority over the non-Arabs, nor is any non-Arab group inherently superior or inferior. God judges only individuals according to their character; there is no superiority except the nobility of character which has no relation to the colour of the skin. Muhammad established a democratic polity in which the Negro and the Arab aristocrat had absolutely the same rights and obligations, not in theory only but in actual practice. All entering this universal brotherhood were each other's equals in all legal, social and economic relations. Later on, the Muslims may have succumbed here and there to pre-Islamic prejudices or non-Islamic influences, but the ideal has, on the whole, been achieved much more in the Islamic than in any other society. Hindu society has been since millenniums split up in numerous major and minor castes on the principles of almost complete segregations to the extent of the savage custom of untouchability—the shadow of an individual of one caste falling on a person of another caste pollutes him. There is neither inter-dining nor inter-marrying.

Christianity should have set a better example with its creed of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. But in this respect it has failed as miserably as Hinduism. Even the unity of the universal Roman Catholic Church was not based on democratic principles. At the top was the infallible Pope whose infallibility is the negation of democracy and then from the point of this pyramid down to its broad base, there is an hierarchy of priests with graded rights and privileges in distinction from the laity. Fundamental division of

priesthood and laity also violates the principle of democracy as taught by modern system of socialism everywhere. Even the Protestant West split Christendom into hostile nation-States on a racial, linguistic or territorial basis. Christian writers devoutly believing in Christianity have acknowledged the role of Islam as an extinguisher of race-consciousness. Dean Inge in his *Outspoken Essays* acknowledges the fact with admiration that Islam has succeeded in overcoming race-consciousness to an extent to which no other creed has succeeded. He says that Muslims from the Far East to the Far West in spite of disparity of language and race have a feeling of belonging together; they feel a oneness not felt by the followers of any other religion. But the most convinced believer of the spirit and mission of Islam in this respect is Professor Toynbee, the famous British historian. I cull here a few quotations from his thought-provoking book, *Civilization on Trial*. After despairing of Western civilisation to produce an antidote to the poison of racialism and nationalism he sees a ray of hope in Islam. He says in the chapter on 'Islam, the West and the Future':

We can, however, discern certain principles of Islam, which, if brought to bear on the social life of the new cosmopolitan proletariat, might have important and salutary effects on the 'great society' in a nearer future. Two conspicuous sources of danger—one psychological and the other material—in the present relations of this cosmopolitan proletariat with the dominant element in our modern Western society are race-consciousness and alcohol, and in the struggle with each of these evils, the Islamic spirit has a service to render which might prove, if it is accepted, to be of high moral and social value.

The extinction of race-consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue; for although the record of history would seem on the whole to show that race-consciousness has been the exception and not the rule in the constant inter-breeding of the human species, it is a fatality of the present situation that this consciousness is felt—and felt strongly—by the very peoples, which, in the competition of the last four centuries between several Western powers, have won, at least for the moment, the lion's share of the inheritance of the Earth.

Though in certain other respects the triumph of the English-speaking peoples may be judged, in retrospect, to have been a blessing to mankind, in this perilous matter of race feeling it can hardly be denied that it has been a misfortune. The English-speaking nations that have established themselves in the New World overseas have not, on the whole, been 'good mixers.' They have mostly swept away their primitive predecessors; and where they have either allowed a primitive population to survive, as in South Africa, or have imported primitive 'man-power' from elsewhere, as in North America, they have developed the rudiments of that paralysing institution which in India—where in the course of many centuries it has grown to its full stature—we have learnt to deplore in the name of 'Caste'. Moreover, the alternative to extermination or segregation has been exclusion—a policy which averts the danger of internal schism in the life of the community which practises it, but does so at the price of producing a not less dangerous state of international tension between the excluding and the excluded races, especially when this policy is applied to representatives of alien races who are not primitive but civilised, like the Hindus, the Chinese and the Japanese. As things are now, the exponents of racial intolerance are in the ascendant, and, if their attitude towards the race question prevails, it may eventually provoke a general catastrophe. Yet the forces of racial toleration, which at present seem to be fighting a losing battle in spiritual struggle of immense importance to mankind, might still regain the upper hand in any strong influence militating against race-consciousness that has hitherto been kept in reserve and were now to be thrown into the scales. It is conceivable that the spirit of Islam might be the timely reinforcement which would decide this issue in favour of tolerance and peace.

The quotation corroborates the evidence of many an impartial observer and critic that the spirit of Islam contains the essentials of democracy in a manner not equalled by any other system of social existence. One might, however, aver that it is commendable as far as it goes but it is only the brotherhood of a cosmopolitan Muslim fraternity. What will be the position of those individuals or groups that remain outside the pale of this brotherhood? A satisfactory answer to this doubt has also been given by Islam and Muslim history. It is one of the tenets of Islamic polity that all religious groups or communities following their own way of life shall enjoy complete liberty of conscience and practice, if they are loyal to the

State. They have complete protection of life, creed and honour; neither any economic nor any legal disability shall be imposed on them. They have complete equality of opportunity and equality before law. They may be governed according to their own personal laws, if those laws do not directly undermine the social fabric. Christians and Jews held some of the highest posts in the State under the Caliphs. It is a historical fact that the Jews when they were persecuted by the Christian States took refuge in Muslim countries where they enjoyed the liberties as other Muslim citizens and where no discrimination was practised against them. Muslim cities never created any Ghettos for the Jews. As a reaction against Zionism and the occupation of a part of Palestine by force and fraud or by the backing of some imperialistic powers, even Russia supporting the Zionist Jews in displacing the Arabs from their homelands, the Arab and some other Muslim countries gave vent to a feeling of retaliation and revenge. But this is only a counterblast. In normal conditions no anti-Jewish movement ever originated in any Muslim country, though the Jews everywhere exploited the Muslims in economic life. Islam did not allow forcible conversion, so the Muslims with all their power and glory remained a minority in Spain after ruling there for seven centuries. As a result of this tolerance they fell victims to Christian intolerance and were exiled *en masse* from that country. If Islam had not definitely prohibited it, the Arabs could have easily used measures of coercion, direct and indirect, to convert the whole population to Islam through the centuries of their political and cultural dominance. The Turks in Eastern Europe ruled for centuries without interfering with the religious and cultural life of the Christian population. In India too eight hundred years of Muslim rule left the Muslims in a minority, particularly in the areas where their political power was the greatest. Every Indian creed and caste was left to follow its own ways, because freedom of conscience and freedom to follow one's own way of life, the essential elements of all true

democracy formed part of the basic principles of Islam. Islam could have gained converts and subsequently enhanced its political dominion by violating its own spirit, which fortunately it refused to do. What would it have availed Islam if, in the words of the New Testament, it had gained the world by losing its soul?

Any social system calling itself democratic is only a travesty of democracy if it justifies slavery or serfdom or tolerates racial or religious inequality in the matter of fundamental human rights. The Greek City-States were constituted of a majority of slave populations and they called all non-Greeks barbarians to whom equal rights could not be extended. In the present-day world also we see countries like the U.S.A. where even a civil war fought partly on the issue of slavery was not able to grant the black population social equality or civil rights in actual practice. The Southern States practise social segregation and heap insults on the Negroes. Lynching is still practised with virtual impunity; the Negroes are kept down by law and convention, though the Constitution of the U.S.A. grants them equal rights of citizenship. In this respect the American way of life is certainly unethical and undemocratic and the U.S.A. cannot hold up its democracy as a model to be imitated by the Muslim world. In this respect they have to learn much from the solidarity of humanity as exemplified in a Muslim society where the Muslim and non-Muslim and the black, the brown and the white live together in peace and amity without any insidious social or economic distinction, enjoying perfect equality of opportunity and equality before law. The Muslim world is technically backward, having been by-passed, owing to unfortunate historical conditions, by the scientific and industrial development of the last two centuries. Technical progress is not difficult to achieve when once a country or an old civilisation is awakened to its great necessity and is free to remould its economic structure. Countries of the East and the West are rapidly acquiring technical skill and are studying modern sciences with great avidity and gusto. If Muslim

countries acquire this knowledge and these skills, they will develop on much healthier lines than the West, because their social instincts are healthier. They have not been poisoned by racialism, nationalism and colour prejudices of the Western type. They will avoid developing economically antagonistic classes. But will countries like the South African Union ever be able to solve their economic, social and political problems by the methods of suppression, exclusion and segregation? It is an irony that such Fascist countries call themselves democratic; it is a strange democracy of race and colour and economic exploitation of a majority of the citizens. Toynbee looks to the spirit of Islam to give a lead to the world; but will these non-Muslim countries be ready to learn anything from Islam? One might say that they need not come to Islam for guidance if they begin to practise Christianity. But the spirit of Christ has now little hold on the nominally Christian countries. That spirit has gradually left their civilisation and the vacuum has been filled by nationalism and racialism or by individual and collective materialistic egoism. Even Christian churches are segregated on a racial basis. The story of a pious Negro in the U.S.A. is often repeated who was refused entry in the church for the whites. He saw Christ in a vision who tried to soothe him by saying that for years ever since this place of worship was built he himself had been excluded from it being a coloured man. Western civilisation is also trying to achieve the impossible in East Africa where a handful of the whites are attempting to consolidate and perpetuate their political and economic ascendancy, by depriving the entire coloured population of any representation in the government. And then these whites are the cultural and political allies of the so-called Western democracies that pretend to lead the world in moral, social and political values.

A Communist might step in here and proclaim with plausible pride that these racial and national distinctions and prejudices were the by-products of bourgeois exploitation; the proletarian revolution has abolished

all racialism and nationalism and has established the principle of equality for all races and nationalities. But what Russia has established is the equality of rightlessness. We are discussing democracy whose essential essence is respect for the individual. If the liberty of conscience and initiative of action in private and public life are equally taken away from all irrespective of their colour and race, and individual lives are completely regimented to subserve an ideology which must be accepted by all, the extinction of racial distinctions does not advance any intrinsic human value. Humanity wanted to do away with these invidious distinctions in order to equalise liberties and opportunities for all to think and live and act as they please provided their behaviour does not undermine the social fabric. The question of liberty under Communism deserves a separate chapter, so we will not dilate on it at this stage. But it had to be mentioned because the Communists feel specially proud of their democratic achievement in having satisfactorily solved the racial and the national problem. Islam solved the problem by granting equal liberties to all; Communism pretends to have solved it by depriving all individuals of essential liberties. There are two ways of getting rid of a disease: the shorter way is the death of the patient. It is wittily said about a surgeon that he reported that the operation was successful but the patient had died! By the Russian method the abolition of class and race distinctions has reduced humanity to a colourless automatism.

With respect to democracy, Islam has nothing to learn either from the U.S.A. or from the U.S.S.R. It is said that the inhabitants of the North American continent have created a democratic system of society and of government, because ever since the Pilgrims in the 'Mayflower' reached Plymouth harbour, the majority of the immigrants and of their offsprings have believed in democratic ideals. The Aryan conquerors of India instituted a caste system because, as conquerors, their aim was to keep the conquered in subjection. But is it not a

fact that the descendants of these Pilgrim Fathers driven by economic need and greed enslaved millions of the images of God in ebony, kept them as pariahs and are still keeping them as such in spite of these blacks being their brethren-in-faith? In the anti-Semitic hysteria in Germany even Jews converted to Christianity were despised and maltreated, and the German nationalists said: '*Jude oder Christ ist einerlei, die Rasse ist schweineerei*' (it is immaterial whether a Jew remains a Jew or becomes a Christian; it is the race which is swinish). This Fascist attitude exists among all English-speaking people who come into contact with coloured races. Empty continents like Australia would not admit coloured immigrants. No Muslim country ever closed its doors to a would-be settler on the basis of his creed or colour. We had to state this distinctive feature of Islamic democracy to bring out an essential trait of it which distinguishes it from all other types of democracies either professed or practised.

The ultimate object of Islamic democracy is the freedom of individual self-realisation. The object of human life is the unification of the human will with the will of God as revealed through the moral and spiritual experiences of the prophets and the saints. But this surrender has to be achieved freely, not by coercion. Whoever thinks and feels that he is in possession of some truth, let him express it freely in word and deed; the others must be free to agree or disagree with him. For Islam the State is not a super-individual entity or deity to be glorified and worshipped; it is only a means to enable the individuals to live in peace and security, to exercise their freedom in ways that appear to them desirable. Any indefinite increase in material production by the sacrifice of non-material human values ought not to be the function of a State. An Islamic State would neither be a totalitarian nor a *laissez-faire* State. The State would leave the individuals free to pursue their individual goals but would certainly interfere where these goals tend to produce an economic or social chaos. There may

be any amount of general planning and encouragement of co-operative efforts but it will never lose sight of the essential value of individual liberty. The State would make efforts to further its ideology but it would be a part of its ideology to allow free scope to the holders of different ideologies to further their own ideals and live their own lives so long as they are loyal to the State and do not conspire to undermine it. Islam believes that an imposed truth ceases to be truth for one on whom it is imposed. The essential condition for the search and pursuit of truth is freedom. As the Qur'an says repeatedly, God could have made all people good by compulsion but He chose not to do it. In matters of conscience there ought to be no compulsion.

And if your Lord had pleased, surely all those who are in the earth would have believed, all of them; will you then force men till they become believers? (x. 99).

There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error (ii. 256).

When Islam inculcates freedom of conscience and freedom of following one's chosen way of life, it means to practise it in all sincerity and earnestness. If after granting freedom of conscience, discrimination is practised against those who hold different views and equality of opportunity and equality before law are denied, then the freedom allowed becomes chimerical. A totalitarian State inserts freedom of conscience in its constitution but it is nullified in practice. They make their ideologies like creeds which must be accepted by those who hope to exercise any power in the State. The nonconformists are either terrorised into silence or made to suffer in different ways. For instance, Russia allows her citizens to be professing Christians or professing and practising Muslims. People there still go to churches and mosques for prayers. But as atheism is the official creed of Russia, no one can become a member of the Communist Party who in any way believes in God or immortality. No religion is allowed to be taught before the age of fourteen. All education is in the hands of the State and every

school inculcates atheism. Atheism must be taught everywhere and theism nowhere. As no one who is not a member of the Communist Party can hope to hold any important post, the believers in any other ideology or creed are eliminated from public or social existence; they suffer from a kind of civil death. If they become loud in proclaiming any other ideology, they may be liquidated. Of what use is the grant of freedom of conscience, if hindrances and risks beset an individual who does not see eye to eye with the ruling class. In a totalitarian State, the individual is completely subjected to the interests of the State, and the interests of a materialistic State, believing in dialectical and historical materialism, can consist of nothing else than the maximisation of material production. Commodities get into the saddle and ride the spirit of man. It is not only in Russia but to a great extent also in all States where religion has lost its hold and matter has gained priority over the spirit, that their conception of human welfare is the increase in material productivity. When the British or the American critics try to prove the superiority of their way of life to the Russian system, they draw up schedules of prices and wages and prove to their own satisfaction that as their workers get four times or eight times more, therefore their system is in every way superior. By measuring human welfare only in materialistic terms they play into the hands of Communistic materialism. Alexander Loveday writes on the very first page of his valuable book, *The Only Way*: 'That it should be taken for granted that every economist would agree that a nation's welfare can be increased only by increasing the number of products put at its disposition, reflects accurately enough the tacit or expressed beliefs of many of the most influential of our social scientists today. Too many economists have assumed that the ideal, the teleological conception, of their normative science is and should be the ideal of life itself, and their materialism has had the most profound influence for the last hundred years or more on our politics, our political philosophy and our

social and personal ideals. Consciously or unconsciously we tend to act and legislate as if our well-being depended on nothing more, nothing other, than producing an uninterrupted series, a constantly increasing quantity of material objects. We tend to judge the merits of our social organisation by its power to produce men and women efficient in converting fragments of matter into specific forms. For a democracy thus impregnated with materialism the transition to any one of the social philosophies that subject the individual wholly to the State presents but little difficulty.'

This priority of the accumulation of material commodities over the enhancement of ethical and spiritual values would run counter to the entire Islamic outlook. Democracy has professed to worship its mundane trinity of liberty, fraternity and equality ever since this slogan was raised in the French Revolution. There is no doubt that all the three are valuable concepts, but their use or misuse depends upon their implications and applications. The cry of liberty was raised by the rising bourgeoisie who were fighting to establish their rights over against monarchical, clerical and feudal privileges. They wanted non-interference of the State in industrial and commercial competition. It was the *laissez-faire* economists who were staunch protagonists of free economic bargaining between the employers and the employed and between different States. As love of liberty is one of the fundamental instincts of man, the masses also were enthused and rose to establish a regime of individual liberties. Everyone suffered from the illusion that if all adults are granted the right to vote and select representatives for legislative assemblies, no exploitation will be possible and all will be well with the workers and the peasants. But the rise of free industrial capitalism created quite a different picture. It had been believed that under universal political liberty the worker will not be coerced; he will refuse to be exploited if he chooses. Under a system of free contact between the employer and the employed, nobody could compel a worker to accept

starvation wages. If workers thought a wage too low they had only to refuse it. In a revolutionary struggle for liberty, the only liberty that the worker received was the liberty to refuse the employer's offer. If liberty were genuine, it should enrich life and not impoverish it; but for the worker the exercise of this liberty meant going without any wages, without any means of subsistence. Large-scale industrialism had taken away the means of production from the hands of individual craftsmen and workers and placed them in the hands of a few capitalists. The worker had no independent means to set up for himself and hence liberty for him became an illusion. The competition of workers for jobs enabled the employers to force wage rates towards the minimum level. The apparent liberty of the worker concealed a real compulsion; the only alternative to acceptance of the employer's offer was starvation. When the political liberty that the bourgeoisie had succeeded to establish was at its highest, the oppression of the wage-earner amounted almost to complete slavery. Women and children were compelled to work for wages below the subsistence level for sixteen hours a day. It was argued that they chose to do it freely. The liberties that existed before the factory and social legislation of to-day was passed converted the life of the general masses into a veritable hell. This proved that any concept of liberty without a moral and spiritual basis, founded only on the material self-interest of man, turns out to be a deception. During the periods of civilisation when slavery could not be abolished at a stroke, prophets and social reformers had attempted to humanise the institution by urging the masters to treat their slaves kindly; as the Prophet of Islam ordained that they had to be fed and clothed as the masters fed and clothed themselves. But under the free economic system based on the so-called liberties of the individual, the employer had no responsibility for the employed. Women and children, old and sick and invalid were worked to death and replaced by others without any compunction. Ever since the

materialistic outlook replaced the religious and ethical outlook in the West, the economists who dominated the field were concerned only with the wealth of nations, which is appropriately the title of the classical work of Adam Smith, the father of modern economics. Economics gradually cut itself adrift from ethics. Workers were exhorted to be industrious, sober and thrifty in the interest of greater production. The wealth of nations increased but it circulated only among a small minority of the rich. The basic principle of Islam that national wealth should feed the whole social organism, and not only circulate among the rich, was disregarded.

Whatever Allah has restored to His Apostle from the people of the towns, it is for Allah and for the Apostle, and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, so that it may not be a thing taken by turns among the rich of you only (lix. 7).

The capitalists considered themselves to be the nation and when they became rich sucking the life-blood of the poor worker, they thanked God for having made the nation prosperous. As a matter of fact, in the developed industrialism and capitalism of England it was not one but two nations; the one was free and the other was enslaved. Great industrial and commercial cities had small, neat and magnificent areas and ever-growing slums. The poverty of one area was an indispensable condition for the wealth of the other areas. A purely capitalistic system, based on unrestricted individual liberties, where capital and surpluses are not taxed by the State, where, on the other hand, capital multiplies fast by interest and usury, and is not compulsorily spread out by inheritance and by State capital levy as Islam had devised, cannot proceed except by concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands. Adam Smith set out to find an answer to the question, as to what would best promote the wealth of nations. The answer given by history is that the wealth of capitalist nations is built up on the poverty of the masses.

If the ideal of a nation is the accumulation of wealth by increasing production and all intrinsic human values are subordinated to this aim, then essential human

liberties must be sacrificed at the altar of the god of production. Capitalism, Fascism and Communism are one in this respect that they are all based on materialistic ideologies and all worship the production of commodities with the implicit faith that heaping of material goods at all costs would enhance human welfare. Capitalism argues that it is a superior system, because the biggest capitalist country, the U.S.A., has the largest production of all sorts of commodities required for peace or war, and the standard of its workers is about eight times the standard attained by Communist Russia. Capitalism does not consider it any great charge against itself, if that higher standard is achieved by exploiting the worker at home or by colonial exploitation of economic imperialism. Progress is not measured in intellectual, moral or spiritual values; the only criterion is the quantity of material commodities. Under Nazism and Italian Fascism also, production increased all along the line and wages rose to some extent. This result was also achieved by the suppression of the liberty of the individual. He had to submit to a thorough regimentation for the strength and the glory of the State. Totalitarian States become militarily strong and suppress the strife of capital and labour by force. This is the repetition of the old story of militaristic Sparta becoming more powerful than Athens engaged in the task of individual freedom. The socialists claim that under a socialist economy production would increase in comparison with capitalism. Maybe a wise socialist economy succeeds in producing commodities in larger quantities so that an average citizen is able to secure more of consumption goods. But, will it necessarily conduce to greater human happiness; will the multiplication of goods automatically advance the values of truth, beauty and goodness; do the people with more goods become more intellectual, more moral and less selfish? Were the individuals or nations that have advanced civilisation and culture, and from whose treasures humanity continues to draw spiritual sustenance, able to advance human values because of abundance of material goods?

Has not history witnessed so often the spectacle of wealth increasing and men decaying? The worship of production has smothered the spirit of man. Technical efficiency does not necessarily create inner harmony nor does it necessarily advance that freedom of the spirit where man rises superior to his material needs and, satisfied with a bare minimum, becomes creative in art and literature and spiritual experience. In bourgeois economy, liberty proved to be chimerical for the common man; the more that economy developed, the more the exploiter and the exploited both dwindled in genuinely human values and human liberties. Having found liberty deceptive, the masses in many countries became ready to barter this doubtful good for merely bread and security; they willingly submitted to servitude. No human being who values real liberty would part with it at any price. The people who so easily threw away their liberties had really never tasted the genuine stuff; they had been deceived by a slogan and were then disillusioned by rude shocks. Human life requires liberty as well as order and discipline; freedom and law have to be synthesised. Excess of order and discipline permeating every nook and corner of an individual's existence atrophies the human spirit, particularly when it is imposed from without with the chief aim only of increasing the power of the State or increasing material productivity. This totalitarian stranglehold is as fatal and destructive of human values as the *laissez-faire* freedom in which individual egoism runs amok. Man has yet to understand the nature, essence, and value of genuine liberty which make the spirit free to create and to contemplate. Only where the spirit of the Lord is, there is real freedom. The Islamic view of freedom is given in the Holy Qur'an. The function of the Prophet is described as removing the halters and shackles from the spirit of man.

Those who follow the Apostle-prophet, the *Ummi*, whom they found written down in the Torah and the Gospel, (who) enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things, and removes from them their burdens and the shackles which were upon them' (vii. 157).

How can a man be free if he is taught by materialism and biologism that he is nothing more than his body and that the purpose of life is the maximum satisfaction of physical instincts. The whole conception of freedom was tainted by false values of life. Man wants freedom not for its own sake, because in itself freedom is a negative and empty concept. He wants freedom to realise whatever he considers to be valuable or desirable. The man who has a wrong sense of values shall be injured by any latitudes that Nature or society grants him. For a long time in British history the barons struggled against the king to gain and retain security for their feudal privileges; it was not a fight for the liberties of the common man. Later on, the merchants, manufacturers and capitalists struck against monarchical and feudal privileges in order to get a free hand in earning and accumulating wealth by fair or foul means. The clash between the Church and the State too had no direct reference to the essential liberties of man as man, so that he may not be used merely as means but be valued and respected as an end in himself. In the latest phase the workers gathered themselves in trade unions as a class solidly hostile to the employers to extract as much as they could from the exploiters of their labour. Their conception of liberty too did not extend beyond a more equitable distribution of profits. Marxism interpreted the entire human history as a class-struggle for material commodities. Marxism is openly and frankly materialistic; as man is matter and the mind or spirit and cultural ideals are illusory by-products, therefore progress means advancement in material production and better distribution. Marxism exhorts the proletariat of the world to unite to smash the old economic system and bring about a revolution as a result of which their physical needs will be more amply satisfied. When production and distribution become collectively organised, man will have attained well-being. A classless society having been established and all group-antagonism having come to an end, what shall man strive after? According to

dialectical materialism only contradictions or strifes are creative; according to that philosophy, some other types of struggles must continue to arise within human society, so that it does not become stagnant and perish. But the millennium and Utopia that they promise to attain and which, according to them, is bound to come by dialectical necessity, even if it becomes stable and permanent, will attain nothing more than a biological equilibrium already achieved to a marvellous extent by the ants and the bees. In the ants and bees Nature aimed not at individuation but collectivisation. In the case of man the evolution of life proceeded by slow steps towards the creation of individuals. Here Nature was faced with a vital and intriguing problem. Life had to become more complex and yet more and more unified and co-ordinated. Spencer defined the course of evolution as advancing from less organised simplicity towards more and more harmonised complexity. This desired harmony must co-ordinate the infinite diversity of evolving life. Nature continued fulfilling its twofold aim of creating individuals and at the same time converting individuality into personality in which almost all elements of the psyche have a direct or indirect social reference. A completely isolated individual would cease to be human. The aim of human evolution is the progressive creation and co-ordination of free personalities.

The liberty that man needs is for the purpose of the realisation of his self which is individual and social at the same time. Human culture has been enriched by individuals who revolted against the regimentation which compelled everyone to think and feel and act in stereotyped uniformity. The spirit creates and flourishes in free, personal attitudes. All great reformers, great thinkers, great saints and great prophets were heretics for their contemporaries. Civilisations and cultures in the stages of their fruition afford wide latitudes for individual attitudes. If society is held together by fundamental social ties, these individual divergences lead to ever-growing richness. The development of the human spirit must be

a free development; even an imposed truth or goodness does more harm than good. Any society that adopts a totalitarian ideology is making an attempt to retrogress towards a condition in which a dead uniformity of thought, feeling and action is attained in the interest of biological equilibrium but at the cost of the life of the spirit.

When the Qur'an said that God did not choose to make all human beings compulsorily good, even though He had the power to do it, and when it inculcated the principle of freedom of conscience for all and liberty for individuals and groups to follow their own ways of life, this teaching corresponded with the nature and the aspiration of the human psyche. Islam gave a teaching which it considered to be unadulterated truth, a system of eternal verities, but it taught at the same time that it is forbidden to impose it on anyone by force. Force is to be used if necessary only to secure essential human liberties for all. The Qur'an says that if God had not repelled the aggressors against religious freedom, the places of worship of all creeds would have been destroyed.

And had there not been Allah's repelling some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered (xxii. 40).

And were it not for Allah's repelling some men with others, the earth would certainly be in a state of disorder (ii. 251).

The Muslims are warned against religious intolerance. Even when they have to fight against some nation, the places of their worship must be considered sacred and protected even during actual fighting and no priest of another religion should be touched. It was forbidden to a master to compel even a slave to change his creed. A slave of the great Caliph 'Umar refused to accept Islam and the Caliph said that he was within his rights to do so. Muslims are accused by their hostile and ignorant critics of ideological intolerance who say that Muslim fraternity is confined only to the followers of the faith. These critics forget that a Muslim may have a non-Muslim wife or mother on whom it is forbidden to bring

any pressure to change her faith. Cases are reported of Muslim sons carrying on their backs their aged Christian mothers to church. Does history offer anywhere greater examples of religious tolerance? Jews and Christians held some of the highest posts in the State under Muslim caliphs and kings.

Fundamental human rights can be secured to all only in a truly Muslim democracy irrespective of creed or race. No Western liberal democracy has as yet succeeded in attaining this ideal. Barriers of racialism and nationalism have become insurmountable. Anti-Semitism in some European countries and even to some extent in the U.S.A. has both a racial and a religious origin. The West waged incessant wars of religious intolerance; different sects of the same Christian religion continued for centuries to persecute one another. Muslim history too is not entirely free from individual religious fanaticism which occasionally raised its head here and there, but, on the whole, Muslim society has been much more tolerant than any other society; its essential spirit has been respect for religious differences. Now that religion has ceased to be a governing factor in Western civilisation, religious intolerance too ceased, not because of a liberal outlook but because of indifference to religious issues, now regarded as immaterial. If toleration had been born of genuine liberalism, racialism and nationalism would not have been so rampant. The truth is that Western society was always illiberal and fanatical as compared with Islam; at some periods intolerance was religious and at other times it was racial or national.

Western fanaticism reached its height in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Both of these ideologies were irreligious or non-religious but the creeds that they promulgated were more fanatical than any other religion. They replaced the worship of God by the worship of a racial State. The way that they tortured human beings for racial and ideological differences has no parallel except in the Spanish Inquisition; but in the scale of their persecution they outstripped the Inquisitors.

The Russian Communists charged the Nazis and the Fascists with national and racial fanaticism and proclaimed themselves as the champions of one world and one humanity. They are supposed to be working to establish a classless society in which national, racial, caste or colour differences shall be obliterated along with economic class-distinctions. Here is an ideal which at first glance has the appearance of an Islamic view of humanity but in actual working it is quite the opposite. Marxism too is a fanatical religion with its zeal for proselytising and persecution of the heretic. The old type of religious fanaticism has been replaced by class-hatred and ideological intolerance. Those who differ are persecuted or liquidated or isolated in forced labour camps. One particular ideology only is inculcated in the entire educational system. The constitution allows individuals to believe in God or Christ or Muhammad, but all children are conditioned in the schools to ridicule all religions. No believing, professing and practising Muslim or Christian may become a member of the Communist party or be entrusted with a responsible job. There is complete ideological intolerance, and there is complete ideological as well as social and economic regimentation. No man is free to think for himself outside the prescribed framework of Communism. The entire nation has been made to sell its liberties to one fanatical ruling party. Freed from the exploiting bourgeois capitalist, they have been enslaved by a gigantic State capitalism, which they are assured is only a passing phase; they should continue to hope for the withering of the State and the removal of all compulsions. So we see that neither Western democracy nor Fascism nor Communism genuinely respects individuals and their essential liberties. None of them treats a human individual as having intrinsic worth and as being an end in himself. Liberties are granted and withheld because of colour or race or ideology. It is only Islam which recognises no racial or national differences as privileges or bars. In the Muslim countries the movement of population is

unrestricted. All communities and nationalities can follow their own ways of life; Islam also allows them to decide their cases according to their own personal laws. This is genuine liberty and genuine freedom of conscience and freedom of expression through word and act. A non-Muslim may be entrusted with any job in which Muslim religious practice is not explicitly required. What is expected from him is unstinted loyalty to the State without any mental reservations. We hear everywhere that democracy means respect for individual liberties and the freedom to follow one's way of life, provided it does not conflict with the similar freedom of others and does not sap the foundations of a free society. Where can such democracy be possible except in an Islamic State which allows the human spirit maximum freedom to adopt any personal attitude towards life and imposes no social or economic disabilities on anyone because of creed, nationality or race?

EQUALITY

The concepts of liberty and equality are twin concepts and it becomes difficult to treat of one in isolation from the other. In discussing liberty we have tried to make it clear that genuine liberty, if it has to serve as a matrix of values, involves the ideas of equality of opportunity and equality before law; power-created, artificial privileges create an artificial inequality which hampers the growth of the human spirit. Democracy, Socialism and Communism raise their voices against inequality and all claim to offer panaceas that would make every man the equal of every other man. The French revolutionaries demanded equality along with liberty. The Massachusetts Bill of Rights and the American Declaration of Independence present it as a self-evident truth. Thomas Jefferson said: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident—that all men are created equal', and Abraham Lincoln repeated this conviction in his famous speeches: 'I leave you, hoping that the lamp of

liberty will burn in your bosoms until there shall no longer be a doubt that all men are created free and equal. Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and created equal' (Abraham Lincoln, Speech in Chicago, Ill., 10 July 1858, and Gettysburg Address, 19 November 1863). Emerson voices the same sentiment when he says: 'There is a little formula, couched in pure Saxon, which you may hear in the corners of streets, and in the yard of the dame's school from little republicans: "I am as good as you be".' In spite of the great authority of reformers and thinkers doubts arise at once when we try to examine this belief more closely. Are men really created equal as Abraham Lincoln asserted? Does psychology, physiology or even religion support it in an unqualified manner? Is it not a fact that human beings are born with great physical and psychological differences due to heredity or other obscure constitutional factors? Born under similar circumstances and faced with almost identical environment, do they not diverge immensely as they proceed in life? Does not the inborn strength or weakness of various instincts modify the character and capacities of different individuals? Is it not a fact that men are made by Nature unequal? Is it not, therefore, vain to treat them as if they were equal? Aldous Huxley says that 'all men are equal is a proposition to which, at ordinary times, no sane individual has ever given his assent' (*Proper Studies*, p. 23). Similarly, Samuel Johnson was of opinion that a general state of human equality does not exist nor is it desirable, and no two men can be half an hour together but one shall acquire an evident superiority over the other. Aristotle too was of opinion that democracy asserting the equality of men arose from the false belief that if men are equal in any respect, they are equal absolutely (*Politics*, Book V).

When there is such a confusion of opinion, it shows that a concept has not been properly defined and different disputants are not talking about the same thing.

Broadly speaking, human beings are equal in this respect only: that all are equally human; they belong to the same species, *homo sapiens*. Dissection of human bodies would reveal a similarity of structure; in this respect the body of Plato would not be different from the body of a savage cave-dweller. In general they are also endowed with similar instincts and emotions. Theologically speaking, they are all the children of one God. But all these similarities and uniformities create no absolute identities. From the point of view of natural laws also, men may be considered equal because they are equally subject to the same laws. Nature is no respecter of persons; the laws of matter and the laws of health and disease operate equally on all men. When great thinkers and reformers assert the equality of man, their thoughts and attitudes really have a reference to the universality of natural law. They have also an explicit reference to the universality and objectivity of moral law. From the universality of physical and moral laws, there follows logically the equality of civil rights and duties and civil laws. If there were diverse moral codes for diverse groups within the same society, the absence of common standards would make all moral judgements arbitrary and subjective, thereby undermining the basis of society. If civil and criminal laws did not operate impartially between different individuals and different groups the idea of justice would lose its meaning. When the prophets and social reformers found that social laws were not operating impartially, they demanded that there should be equality before law. When they saw that privileges or disabilities were maintained and perpetuated by legal and political systems they pleaded that laws should be levellers. Natural inequalities have always been taken for granted by human beings; only artificial inequalities were always resented. Inequalities of skill, inequalities of physical or mental endowment and inequalities of character were always accepted as part of the natural order of things. It would be silly to fly in the face of facts. Whenever

the privileged groups exercised their privileges to benefit themselves to the detriment of others, the moral sense of man revolted and demanded the abolition of artificially created privileges. The individuals of privileged class are no better than others judged by any natural or ethical standards, so the unprivileged man stood up and said: 'I am as good as you; why should I be treated shabbily?' The demand for equality before law and equality of opportunity is a justifiable demand because the health of the social organism depends on it.

But the facts of human diversity and inequality of endowment are so patent that no society has ever succeeded or ever will succeed in creating a dead uniformity. Human life is based on equality as well as inequality, on unity as well as diversity. Human society depends on a series of organisations but every organisation is necessarily an hierarchy in which co-operation rests on command and subordination; those with superior talents command and those that are less gifted obey. If the rewards of superior and inferior skill were unnaturally equalised, individuals shall have no incentive to rise to higher levels through intelligence, character and industry. The French Revolution cried for equality but succeeded in establishing only equality before law or the equality of the ballot-box; otherwise men remained unequal, and economic inequality was further accentuated by the creation of an industrial bourgeoisie and industrial proletariat. The same phenomenon occurred in other Western countries where immense wealth was created and concentrated in the hands of a small minority. Marxism rose as a protest against the rise of antagonistic classes and proclaimed that genuine equality is only economic equality which will be produced only by a proletarian revolution. Has Marxism succeeded better in this respect? Marxism put before humanity a Utopia of flat equalitarianism; it was a new dispensation, a religion of equality practised to the utmost limits. Like the levellers and diggers of the English revolution, the millennium was expected to bring about

equality in every respect. There would be no rulers and ruled, employers and employed, and life conditions of all from top to bottom would reach the same level, no one demanding superior rewards for superior services. It was said that money is the great source of inequalities, so money shall be abolished and only ration cards distributed for common necessities. Let me quote from D.J. Dallin's book translated from the Russian, *The Real Soviet Russia*. He paints a vivid picture of this enthusiasm for equality in the early stages: $\int x$.

Everything that stood in the way of equality was to be abolished, at once, completely: that was the spiritual crux of the November Revolution and of the ideology of the early period of the Soviet regime. Equality in consumption and strict rationing were to eliminate inequality in the distribution of food supplies. The floor space of houses and apartments was carefully measured and the available space equally distributed among the population. The peasants divided landlords' estates, the workers seized the factories and drove the old owners into the street. Expeditions from the cities requisitioned grain supplies from the villages for the hungry cities. Soldiers tore shoulder straps from the officers' uniforms. All ranks were abolished to make sure that not a vestige of the old inequality is left. Instead of the aristocracy the workers and the peasants were to rule the country, and every house-maid must learn how to govern the State, for all were now to be equal. Political democracy, in its accepted sense, was found to be inadequate, because it did not guarantee social equality. Lenin hailed the Paris Commune because it had equalised the pay of State employees and workers, and he promised for Russia 'the reduction of the pay of all without excepting Government leaders, to the regular wage-scale of the workers.'

During this early Utopian enthusiasm decrees and manifestos implementing the creed of equality were issued in quick succession. Thousands died as martyrs of these visionary ideals and thousands were maimed, tortured and killed. Here is a specimen of one of the army decrees:

Henceforward, the Army of the Russian Republic, consists of free and equal citizens, bearing the honourable calling of soldier of the Revolutionary Army. All privileges associated with former ranks and ratings, as well as all insignia of rank (epaulettes) are abolished. All titles are eliminated. All decorations, etc., are eliminated. All separate officers' organisations are dissolved.

War and revolutionary chaos are also great levellers even without any idealism or ideology. This was the condition of Russia in the early years. Money had lost all its value and so essential commodities had to be rationed and the rations were more or less equal. A well-paid bureaucracy could not be established under the circumstances, so the government employees and workers received almost equal 'commodity rubles'. It was an equality of primitive poverty: it was a virtue which was the child of necessity. Material comforts, if they could be procured, were enjoyed by the Party leaders quietly and perhaps with a little bad conscience. But the tide of equalitarianism began to ebb very soon. When the leaders of the Revolution started the work of actual reconstruction, hierarchies of talent and skill had to be established at every step. Natural differences necessitating differences in reward and emoluments asserted themselves sweeping away unrealistic equalities. Higher and lower brackets of wage-scales were sanctioned by the government. Communism had to retreat rapidly towards natural distinctions, but as it was difficult to confess the unreality of a forced equality it was said that the lapse was of a temporary nature dictated by an expediency. A new economic policy was adopted by Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. Now Bukharin addressed the peasants asking them to enrich themselves. Stalin now began to abuse the equalitarians as unrealistic scatter-brains who consider money and trade as unnecessary. We quote here again from Dallin: 'Stalin assailed the demand for social equality by dubbing it ironically the *Uravnilovka*, the contemptuous Russian slang for equalitarianism and said: "These people think that Socialism requires equality in the needs and personal life of the members of society. These are petty bourgeois views of our left-wing scatter-brains. We know greatly how our industry has been injured by the infantile exercises of our left-wing scatter-brains. The left-wingers do not understand that money and moneyed economy will remain with us for a long time"'

(*The Real Soviet Russia*, p. 19). Mikhail Tomsky who objected to any further differentiation in wage-scale was removed from office and ultimately committed suicide. Now contrast this with Islamic realism about equality and inequality. Islam says that in their fundamental nature men are alike and they are governed by universal laws which operate within and without them. In consonance with these basic uniformities they are governed by the same moral laws; therefore society should be governed by uniform civil laws which should reflect the ethical foundation of man. But as Nature, notwithstanding the rule of uniformities, creates also immense variety and diversity, so does human nature differentiate itself in various individuals. The Qur'an says that this variety represents as much the 'Signs of the Lord' as the uniformity with which the will of the Lord operates.

And one of His signs is the creating of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colours (xxx. 22).

Men are not created absolutely equal in every respect; some are more gifted than the others. Those who are more gifted are asked to be thankful to God and express their gratitude by sharing their gifts with the less gifted.

And Allah has made some of you excel others in the means of subsistence, so those who are made to excel do not give away their sustenance to those whom their right hands possess, so that they should be equal therein; is it then the favour of Allah which they deny? (xvi. 71).

Satan threatens them with poverty if they part with their hoarded surpluses but God gives them an assurance that the sharing of the gifts with the needy would not diminish them in quantity and quality and would ultimately lead to the enhancement of well-being. God has not chosen to create dead equality and does not want man to create it by force. Differences in talent and industry are bound to be differently rewarded. The knowing and the ignorant, the blind and the seeing are not equal. Individual initiative must not be curbed and

people should not be forcibly deprived of what they have earned with honest labour and by the exercise of intelligence. They should part, however, with a portion of their surpluses voluntarily. Hoarding for greed and mere love of accumulation of wealth is denounced violently in the Qur'an:

And as for those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah's way, announce to them a painful chastisement. On the day when it shall be heated in the fire of hell, then their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded with it. This is what you have hoarded for yourself; therefore taste what you hoarded (ix. 34-35).

Wealth is not injurious in itself. It is a blessing if it is rightly acquired and rightly spent. It has, however, only an instrumental value. It is a commodity that remains healthy only in circulation and it begins to generate poisons if it begins to accumulate and stagnate in a few hands. The Qur'an asks society to regulate itself in such a manner that wealth does not circulate only among a few rich people. There is no bar to a man's earning by trade or manufacture as much as he can by legitimate means. Trade is allowed but usury is prohibited. Islamic laws of inheritance are also so designed that even large wealth is spread out by splitting up. Economic inequalities of an unsocial nature are created by large-scale capitalism and large-scale landlordism. Under the Islamic laws none of these two evils could be allowed to develop. Islam does not desire to impose Utopian equality on society. It allows free initiative and the right to hold private property but they are subject to the laws and necessities of public weal. Unnatural equalitarian experiments have been tried in a number of times in human history but they have always fizzled out. Russian Communism which boasted of establishing a regime of absolute equality has reverted again to natural inequalities although still pretending to be working towards a millennium of equality. They say it is not yet Communism, it is still Socialism tainted by bourgeois methods. The attempt at forcible levelling caused

untold suffering, finally leading back to a system of accursed hierarchies. Other nations have experimented with *laissez-faire* capitalism on the basis of a spurious conception of equal rights. This system too caused great injustice by creating two antagonistic and mutually hating classes of society. Both systems accused each other of fostering hatred and hostility and prepared humanity for a global war of mutual extermination. In the teachings of Islam we find the practicable and desirable middle path, synthesising the maximum freedom of the individual with the welfare of society and the solidarity of humanity. The Qur'an named the followers of Islam as the people of the middle path:

And thus We have made of you a nation of the middle path that you may be the bearers of witness to the people and (that) the Apostle may be a bearer of witness to you (ii. 143).

Even geographically the Muslim world stands midway between the hostile world of the East and the West. Ideologically too, it stands in the middle and is in best position to show the *via media*.

The Muslim world has no industrial proletariat. All the rage of Marxism was directed against capitalistic bourgeois industrialism with wage-earning masses that split up society into antagonistic groups; it attempts to remedy this evil by the intensification of class-hatred; the remedy has turned out to be worse than the disease. Immense violence did not create any desirable equality of opportunity or equality before law. Marx said that Communism would come only where industrial exploitation and capitalism are at their height. Industrialisation in the Muslim countries is only in its initial stages and hence, according to the Marxian dialectic, the have-not proletariat cannot develop in it to be mobilised for a class-war. But the Muslim countries have to develop essential industries with increasing technical knowledge and organisation. The question is: shall they follow the path of *laissez-faire* Western capitalism or Communism which curbs all free thought and

free initiative? If the spirit of Islam is alive or is revived in these countries, they will follow neither of these paths which history has tried and found wanting in the presentation and creation of essential human values. Islam stands for genuine liberty of the individual and genuine equality of opportunity for all. In the Islamic way of life wealth will be created, but it will continue to circulate in the entire social organism. Private property will be allowed, but it will not remain accumulated in a few hands. There will be an annual capital levy as ordained by Islam. Essential large-scale industries and concerns may be publicly owned by public funds, either the State financing them from its resources or owned by a large number of shareholders. The sharing of profits by labour and capital is allowed by Islam in equitable proportions. On the basis of sharing of profits and risks, the interests of labour and capital can be identified. Muslim economics is based on co-operation and not on cut-throat competition. Marxian dialectic talks unceasingly of the synthesis of opposites. Marxism has attempted a negation of capitalism but has itself remained a negation. Now, history is awaiting the negation of this negation. Islam is really the synthesis of this thesis and antithesis. We hope the Muslim world will realise that it has to transcend these opposites. Individual freedom and social welfare can be synthesised. Early Islam performed that experiment successfully in the old world economy and succeeded to the extent that the limitations of circumstances could permit. If the Muslims have not lost that vision they can remould the present world according to it. Toynbee, as already quoted, believes that Islam has a mission for the present and the future, of transcending national and racial prejudices. That is true. But Islam has another vital mission too, of transcending the one-sidedness of *laissez-faire* liberty and totalitarianism. It is a creed of the middle path, and virtue, according to Aristotle, is a mean between two extremes.

The Individual, the Society and the State

THE central problem in all social existence is the relation of the individual to the society in whose matrix he lives and moves and has his being. Man is defined by Aristotle as a political animal; for him the term 'political' included all that we call social. 'He who is able to live alone must either be a god or a beast.' There may be a supra-social existence above man and an infra-social existence below man, but at the human level individuality and sociability are two aspects of the same being. During the course of evolution Nature developed gregarious instincts in some animals creating collectivity in emotions and attitude, until the stage of the termite and the bees was reached, where an organic and functional totalitarianism reached its climax. Advancing towards man she created reason and liberty. The instincts left to themselves ceased to be the sure and miraculous guides in the preservation of the individuals and the species. This is surely a perilous gift; properly exercised it may make an individual touch the fringes of divinity but if mishandled it may make him sink below the animals. It opens up the possibility of ascending to the Olympus or falling into abysmal degradation to be confounded by the imperiousness of instincts running riot. But reason and liberty did not emerge full-fledged; they had to be developed by slow stages. Leaving aside man's life in the caves and the woods when we see him stepping into organised social existence in its most primitive form, we find him as the member of a tribe. The first self that is awakened in man is the tribal self; it would take very long before the individual emerges,

capable of thinking and feeling and acting according as he thinks fit. All his ways of life are determined for him by social inheritance; from birth till death there is hardly any phase of his life in which he could exercise a modicum of individual choice. If man had advanced only on these lines, the tribes congregating into nations either by creeds or by conquest, he could have developed only the totalitarian instincts of the bees and the ants. The study of human culture and the advances made in civilisation reveal the incontrovertible truth that all the great advances made in the creation and realisation of specifically human values were achieved by the emergence of individuals who in some way or other developed certain attitudes towards life different from the herd. Darwin propounded the hypothesis of chance variations to explain the emergence of new species with novel characteristics which survived because of their better adaptation to the environment. Human species, biologically speaking, has retained the same shape and organic functions for millions of years and there is little prospect of man's changing his physical frame fundamentally even in any remote future. But man has changed culturally from the caveman to the philosopher, the saint, the prophet and the scientist, who bear no mental and moral resemblance to their most primitive ancestry. What is it that has made this evolution possible? This advance was evidently effected by individuals who were generally considered to be freaks. These were the individuals who did not feel themselves adapted to their environment and were comparatively free from the pressure and coercion of their social heredities. As Bernard Shaw has put it in his own peculiar way, 'all advances were made by unreasonable men'—by men who were considered unreasonable because they would not adapt themselves to that reason that had become stereotyped and fossilised in ideas and customs.

Human societies have always been intolerant towards such individuals; they were boycotted, persecuted or killed for the sheer reason of their nonconformity. They

are the shakers of herd morality and all the instincts of the herd rise in righteous indignation against the man who questions all the answers to their problems of existence. If the herd had always succeeded, mankind would have remained stagnant for millenniums. But it so happens that the seed sown by these shakers begins to germinate in some minds slowly; maybe he was right, maybe we misunderstood him when he was pointing the better way. In the past very few of these shakers succeeded to convert an influential section of people in their lifetime. It takes some time before people begin to take notice of him and ultimately to admire and adore him. They build monuments to him with the stones with which they had pelted him. Then they begin to vie with one another in doing honour to the man whom their ancestors had either completely ignored or persecuted. 'Seven cities warred for Homer being dead, who living had no roof to cover his head,' and these were the very cities 'through which the living Homer begged for bread'. All individualists do not enter history; many must have left this world unremembered and unsung having created only ripples on the surface of their social existence.

The individualist is neither always right nor always mistaken. Even the unsocial criminal is an individualist. He comes into conflict with society not because he is above it but because he is below it. He wants to smash the 'sorry scheme of things entire' only to satisfy his individual erratic desire. He does not stand for any re-valuation of values but for the destruction of all values so that he may become a law unto himself. The dilemma of human civilisation is that for its stability and betterment it wants permanence as well as change. The physical nature which encompasses and sustains human existence has struck a balance between both these factors. It is always changing and always the same; it is a compromise between infinite uniformity and infinite diversity. Nature has solved its problem but man seems to be confounded facing these apparently contradictory alternatives. The pendulum of history swings between

order and change, between social rigidity and individual liberty. Pericles in his famous oration praised Athenian culture on the ground that the Athenian way of life had established the maximum liberty of conscience and liberty of expression. Greek philosophy at its highest, in the thought of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, achieved the best fruits of free inquiry. But when this individual liberty had reached its climax, it produced on the one hand the Sophists who denied all objectivity and universality of truth, preached the relativity of morals and taught that the basis of all established institutions was subjective, and on the other hand it gave birth to a peculiar kind of democracy where ignorant men called alphabetically in very large numbers decided private disputes, questions of war and peace and sat in judgement on the beliefs and conduct of citizens. It was such a jury that condemned Socrates to drink the hemlock and by a chance majority ended the life of its greatest citizen and the greatest intellectual moralist in all history.

Over against Athens as her rival was Sparta, a rigid militarist totalitarian State, which tolerated no individualism, no free speculation about the problems of existence in general or of human life in particular. Its morals and manners were calculated to enhance the power and glory of the State; all values rotated round this axis. Such a State is militarily more solid and its discipline, blindly and uncritically accepted, concentrates all human energies for the realisation of one single goal. Such a State suppresses all individuality in the interests of social solidarity. When such a State comes into conflict with a democratic State, where individuals are not thoroughly regimented, the latter proves weaker than the former, at least at the outset, though it may triumph at the end by a concerted effort.

In the mind of Plato we find the first strong manifestation of revulsion against democracy with the unlimited freedom of every individual not only to be the arbiter of his own destiny but the destiny of the society and the State. Every individual, however ignorant,

considered himself competent to make laws and decisions of vital import. Plato ridicules the ignorance of a society in which nobody would ask anyone to make or mend his shoes unless he was sure that the man was a skilled shoemaker who had spent years in acquiring that skill, but would lightly entrust the State to the whims and tender mercies of men who had neither the capacity nor the knowledge for such difficult and delicate tasks. Being distrustful of the irrational liberties of the common man, he proposed to achieve the solidarity and well-being of the State by entrusting it to a selected group of well-born and well-educated individuals who had no private interest either of property or of family and who having realized the nature of the good were fitted to organise the life of the State in accordance with the principles of justice.

Plato is the first great thinker to plan a totalitarian State in which citizens should be eternally divided between two castes: the rulers and the ruled. For the common mass, their life is to be regulated by laws made for them by the philosophers, because the common man pursuing various vocations for livelihood and profit is incapable of ordering his own life or the life of the State. The philosophers shall be the rulers, the legislators and the guardians of the State. There will be little individualism in their own lives because the rigid discipline to which they shall have to submit in order to make them proof against untruth and injustice would leave no room for individual thinking or individual planning for themselves. All this follows logically from Plato's concept of reality as consisting of unchanging, universal ideas or forms. For him, individuality and particularity are illusions to be got rid of; all that is real is universal. The chief aim of life is the realisation of universal truths and the freedom of the ignorant has no value. Therefore, those in possession of truth would be justified in annihilating their own individualities and also the individualities of the ignorant masses in order to incorporate universal ideas in their lives. Eternal truth is there to behold and a class should be created that brushes aside

the desires of individuals to embody universal truth in every aspect of their lives.

Islam never envisaged the State as an all-embracing, super-personal entity which has a right to suppress all personal initiative and all personal liberty. All human values have their root in liberty; liberty is to be encouraged and not abrogated in the interest of any imaginary or material advancement. As liberty is a presupposition for the development of all mental, aesthetic and moral values, there can be no real human end which could justify the suppression of personal liberty as a means to it except that limitation which is imposed by the necessity of law and order and by the need of those elements of social justice without which no civilised society could exist. The eternal problem of human culture is the creation of a balance and equilibrium between individual liberty and social order. If undue emphasis is laid on personal liberty, society cannot be co-ordinated into an organic whole. On the other hand, if the love of uniformity and order becomes inordinate, the result is regimentation and totalitarianism. The beauty of Islam is that it promulgated a doctrine of individual liberty and tolerated different ways of life within its polity, but when society is endangered by disturbers of peace or when individual initiative and liberty begin to assume an un-social character, then it becomes the duty of the State to restore the balance by all the forces at its command. Islam allows a person to create as much wealth as he can by his knowledge, skill and labour, through means that are not un-social and immoral, and it envisages natural inequality of energy and aptitude which would necessarily result in the inequality of material or social rewards. But as all society is one organism, it prohibits all those measures that lead to the concentration of wealth in a few hands. It is a Qur'anic injunction that economic life must be so organised that too much wealth does not remain locked up in private treasuries. Like all religions, Islam inculcates charity but it goes further than any other creed by imposing a capital levy on all surpluses

that remain unutilised in single hands for a whole year. This is the famous principle of Zakat which is a distinctive feature of the socio-economic system promulgated by Islam. We have already mentioned elsewhere in this book the Islamic law of inheritance which was a means of the dispersion of capital, creating a comparative equality of opportunity for a number of individuals to start life again on the basis of individual initiative and personal effort. No will would be valid which disposes of more than one-third of the property and those who have already inherited cannot be again beneficiaries of that will. As already mentioned, feudalism can have no place in Islam and big landlordism cannot develop because of fragmentation of estates by inheritance. Another great source of accumulating unearned income is usury which was prohibited categorically.

This is a most scientifically devised system of socialism which allows a large field to personal initiative, permits private property but at the same time creates such checks and balances that liberty and order get balanced. Islam is as much against *laissez-faire* capitalism as regimented totalitarianism which spreads its tentacles to every aspect of an individual's life to the extent of strangling his conscience. There was liberty granted not only to individuals but to communities within the State to follow their own ways of life, provided they did not indulge in any habit which poisons the whole of the social organism. The Qur'an prohibited usury to the Muslims but the Prophet would not allow even non-Muslims to indulge in it because the rest of society could not be immunised against the poison of a usurious group.

Islam has definitely equalitarian trends but it does not believe in levelling down all differences by force. Let people think freely, believe freely, act freely, create wealth, if they can, freely but legitimately. But evidently free actions of individuals will create differences in achievements and material gains. If society in general or any portion of it is not suffering from dire misery and paralysing poverty, let there be gradations of wealth

honestly earned and innocently enjoyed. But it is the duty of society to make an attempt to eradicate indigence. Taxes and capital levies at the higher level must be used to lift the down-and-out so that they do not lose all sense of human dignity. The Prophet of Islam visualised a time when a man walking through the land with charity to dispense shall find no one to accept it. It was to actualise this ideal State that his great companion and successor, 'Umar Faruq, guaranteed the essentials of life to all citizens.

Islamic Socialism

SOcialism is one of the most important forces shaping the world of the twentieth century, but it is a tendency in all vital concepts or attractive ideals to be used as slogans and it is in the nature of slogans to be vague so that theorists as well as men of action may have the freedom to suit them to their own ideas and purposes. So many people profess to believe in God, but what different individuals and religious communities mean by it ranges from an impersonal, infinite, qualityless substance to a personal Being endowed with consciousness, will and purpose with whom individual minds can enter into most intimate personal relations. He may be fierce and revengeful like the Jehovah of the earlier periods of the Old Testament, concerned chiefly with the destinies of one chosen people, or he may be a Being of love and mercy as we find in Christianity and Islam. He may be absolute, changeless reason or self-thinking thought, the God of Aristotle and many another philosopher. The same is the case with democracy which is used for systems of political and social relations as divergent as Nazism, Fascism, Communism and the liberal democracies of England, France or the U.S.A. Each one claiming to be in possession of the genuine article accuses the other of attempts to pass a counterfeit coin. The vagueness of the term 'democracy' has infected the cognate conception of Socialism. The Social Democrats of pre-Nazi Germany claimed to be socialists but the dictatorial regime of the Hitlerian pattern also called itself National Socialism. The Communist Russia has also named itself as a federation of Socialist republics.

The British Labour Party also has declared itself as a Socialist Party. When mortal adversaries claim to follow the same creed which they interpret in diametrically opposite ways, it becomes extremely baffling to find out any basic and unchanging attributes which could serve as clear, logical differentia.

The difficulty of getting at a clear-cut definition is also increased by the fact that pure socialism, like pure capitalism, is difficult to find anywhere in actual practice. There is little dispute about the ownership of the means of consumption; in this respect both systems allow wide latitudes. The dispute is centred on the ownership of the means of production, mainly land and capital. Socialism in its pure form is understood to mean the public ownership of the means of production but even under a system which is labelled as capitalistic we find a considerable amount of public and co-operative ownership of the means of production. On the other hand, even the Soviet system does not offer an example of pure socialism because collective farmers are allowed a certain amount of livestock and a strip of land for private agricultural production. There is no doubt, however, that socialism demands a progressive or radical change in the character of property relations tending more or less towards public ownership of important means of production. One need not be a Marxist to acknowledge the simple fact that the property system of any society affects the lives of individuals in almost every phase; the laws, institutions, as well as morals of a society reflect to a considerable extent the property relations on which the economic life of that society is based.

Even when a society has passed beyond the stage of slavery or feudalism, if it is as yet non-socialistic, one would find large landed estates where the actual tiller of the soil is a tenant-at-will or an agricultural labourer. If the society has developed industrial capitalism the essential means of production are concentrated in the hands of a small percentage of the total population, and large masses become propertyless wage-earners. Production

is left chiefly to the private owners of capital; in a *laissez-faire* economy the State is not entitled to interfere in economic or property relations. Supply and demand are left to the vagaries of the market with its booms and slumps. Every producer produces primarily for his own profit. The aim of socialism is planned economy, and economy cannot be planned as a whole unless production is regulated not by private but by social interests. Communistic socialism aims at the establishment of a classless society abolishing the distinction of the employer and the employed, the owners and the wage-earners, or as it is now commonly called the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. Such a reconstruction would recast the entire social system through a fundamental change in property relations. The dichotomy of society into antagonistic classes is a necessary product of the private ownership of all means of production and, if they are publicly owned, class-divisions are automatically dissolved. In a capitalist society individuals are bent upon private profiteering and accumulation of wealth for security, glory and power. The aim of Socialism is to reshape production and distribution in a way that it offers essential security of livelihood to every individual; power or influence is gained not through wealth but through social service.

Here are two definitions of socialism by two eminent social scientists. 'Socialism is any device or doctrine whose aim is to save individuals from any of the difficulties or hardships of the struggle for existence and the competition of life by the intervention of the State' (William Sumner). 'Socialism is that policy or theory which aims at securing by the action of the central democratic authority a better distribution and, in due subordination thereto, a better production of wealth than now prevails' ('Socialism', *Ency. Brit.*, 13th Ed.). The definition of Sumner is much too broad and would include many general social reforms and welfare schemes without essentially remodelling property relations. The second definition by James Bonar covers the essential

trends and purposes of the socialist scheme.

The reader will have noticed in the characterisation of socialism given above that in its pure or extreme form it remains hardly distinguishable from what is now generally called Communism. The boundary line between the two is so vague and confused that even well-informed people find it very difficult to draw hard and fast lines between the two. Communism is a much older term than socialism. Sparta had Communism based only on the militarism of the ruling class which pooled its consumption goods for strengthening their military power. Plato's *Republic* also promulgated a scheme of Communism for the philosophers and the guardians of the State. But neither the Spartan nor the scheme of Plato envisaged a democratic, classless society. Both the States had large slave populations with no civic rights, and Plato's scheme was based on a rigid caste system in which the craftsmen, the workers and the peasants, forming the majority of the population apart from a large number of slaves, were not included in the communistic scheme, which was considered suitable to the ruling classes only. Complete Communism was propounded only as a Utopia by Thomas Moore in 1516. Moore wanted an entire society to be based on the community of property.

In 1830 and 1840 extensive literature on social reform and reconstruction was produced in Western Europe. At first, only the followers of Robert Owen were called socialists but later on various writers and sects, particularly originating in Germany, appropriated this term, and a variety of ideologies and schemes confused the essential issues. When Marx and Engels entered the arena, they wanted to distinguish themselves from the other socialist groups and so used the term 'Communism' for the uncompromising scheme that they put forward. They called their league the Communist League, and their manifesto, the Communist Manifesto, published in 1848. Later, however, when the Marxists forged ahead and drove others into the background, they again began to use the terms 'Communist' and 'Socialist'

interchangeably. But in a still later development the two schemes were distinguished clearly by Marx himself in his 'Critique of the Gotha Programme'. Therein he said that the revolution or the economic reconstruction of society would be achieved in two stages. The phase that would succeed capitalism immediately he called the socialist phase. The vicious legacy of the capitalistic regime could not be wiped out all at once. The State that has always been an engine of coercion shall have to be maintained and strengthened on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat for protection against its enemies; bourgeois values and ideas will still colour the life of the people, income shall have to be calculated on the basis of work done and not on the ground of the needs of the workers. But the inner dialectic of the proletarian revolution will increase the productive forces immensely which will inevitably lead to the ultimate transcendence of all limitations. When this higher stage is reached the State will wither away and along with it all limitations on the well-being of the individual. Till the stage, called by him Communism *par excellence*, is reached, the worker, though no more exploited by private capitalists, will continue to be a wage-earner and his standard of living may not ostensibly be higher than that attained by a worker under capitalism. In the first stage the structure necessarily would resemble State Capitalism, but this term is to be avoided because the worker will indirectly be his own employer and the instruments of production will belong to him in the corporate ownership of society. Lenin adopted the viewpoint of Marx and ever since Communism has been held out as an ideal and a goal. It is not the actual condition of things in Russia. In practice Soviet Russia has been in the first stage, though property relations have been undergoing great changes from phase to phase. From 'War Communism' to the New Economic Policy of Lenin and onwards to the abolition of all private trade and the establishment of collective farming Russia is supposed to have been advancing step by step towards

Communism, but the goal is still far off. The workers and peasants are regimented and made to work on conditions imposed by the State, which, far from withering, has been increasing its power and control. Every individual is a wage-earner on wages which are not determined by him. He cannot refuse to work nor change his job or place of work or residence. Russia is not a communist but a socialist State of a particular variety. While dealing with Communist practice and ideology one must never lose sight of the distinction established clearly by Marx and Lenin. One may discuss the ultimate goal of Communism as an ideal and an ideology or one may discuss the socialist experiment in Russia and compare it with the socialist experiments that are being carried on in other countries. We will be referring to these experiments when necessary but our main purpose in this book is to bring out the salient features of socialism as envisaged by Islam.

In dealing with Islam it will make for clarity if we deal with the ideal teachings and trends of Islam separately from the experiment it made with the actual economic and social conditions at its advent; we must also beware of confusing the whole issue by wrongly identifying Islam with the laws and customs prevailing at the present time in various Muslim countries. Ideals are never completely actualised in the life of an individual or a community at one particular time or epoch. Actual circumstances always impose certain limitations and consequently the realisation is never equal to the aspiration. But the genuineness and practicability of an ideology has to be tested by the earnestness of the efforts made and the success achieved though in a more or less compromised or modified form.

In distinction from many other older religions, Islam aimed at not only a total change of outlook but a total revolution in social, political and economic life of the people who profess it. We will study its chief features in a broad outline and then leave it to the reader to judge whether society as intended to be moulded by Islam

would be called socialistic and if so in what way it resembles in some of its traits other socialistic experiments carried on elsewhere and in what respect it possesses some distinctive characteristics.

Socialism is generally considered to be a remedy for removing the inequality of opportunities created by an unjust accumulation and unfair distribution of wealth. When reformists with a zeal for social justice see that society has been split up into the over-nourished and the under-nourished, with superfluous wealth extravagantly squandered on the one hand and abject poverty and insecurity on the other, their first cry is for equality. They say that men are born equal and hence they have equal rights to the goods of life. In their enthusiasm men cease to distinguish between natural and man-made inequalities. One must state, at the outset, quite frankly that Islam does not believe in any Utopian, unrealistic equality between individuals of all types. Human beings are born with varying gifts. As they differ in their bodies and their features so that no two individuals even among countless millions are ever completely alike, so they differ in their mental and other inborn traits. And after having been born, they will encounter different environments and circumstances which would materially affect their conduct and character. This is what is called *Taqdir* or destiny of man which for him is the data of life or the raw material which he has to mould as best as he can. It is only the broad features of the human shape and human nature which may be called the common inheritance of all humanity. If this is the equality meant by those who say that men are born equal, Islam has no quarrel with this idea. But within the framework of these broad uniformities, there are infinite diversities due to differences in natural endowments. The Qur'an says explicitly that some men are more gifted than others.

See how We have made some of them to excel others (xvii. 21).

At their base human instincts are similar in all

individuals though they may vary in their relative strength. About the strong, unchanging bedrock of instincts the Prophet said: 'If someone tells you that a mountain has shifted from its site you might believe it, but don't believe him if he tells you that a man has altered his instincts.' Along with the similarity of human instincts goes the similarity of men in being endowed with reason and moral sense. No human being, according to Islam, is originally utterly devoid of intelligence though it may be greatly blurred by wrong attitudes and wrong passions. There is one more essential trait with which man is endowed and that is freewill. Inner and outer nature points out to him alternatives of action among which he can choose one or the other.

Surely We have created man from a small life-germ uniting (itself). We mean to try him, so We have made him hearing, seeing. Surely We have shown him the way: he may be thankful or unthankful (lxxvi. 23).

The relation between the relative influences of heredity and environment can never be satisfactorily established or demonstrated. Similarly, the roles of destiny and freewill remain wrapped in mystery. Islam teaches only this that both are indubitable facts of life, however logic may fall short of grasping it. Numerous verses of the Qur'an give both aspects almost in the same verse. So the Islamic doctrine is that men are equal or similar in some respects and unequal or dissimilar in other respects. Nature in general is a system of uniformities and diversities and a set of phenomena are uniform and diverse at the same time. According to the Islamic teaching, any system of society that would try to create a dead level of equality among human individuals would fail because it would contravene fundamental laws of Nature. But these natural inequalities must not be reinforced and fortified by artificial inequalities. Gifts are not meant to be hardened into privileges. Individual inequalities are real but no classes should be allowed to be formed on the basis of distinctive rights with special laws governing different classes. Society must not be divided into classes

of the rulers and the ruled, the privileged and the unprivileged.

Let us take one by one the measures that Islam adopted to abolish artificial privileges which always went hand in hand with economic exploitation.

The greatest economic exploiter is the monarchy. A monarch considered himself the master of his realm and lord of his subjects. The entire revenues of his kingdom collected justly or unjustly formed his private purse. In spending these revenues he was not responsible to anyone. He bestowed as much as he liked on those who gained his favours and took away as much as he chose from those who earned his wrath. The first step in socialism must necessarily be the abolition of this institution. One might say that a limited constitutional monarchy may go well together with a good measure of socialism, but Islam in its purity recognises no type of hereditary monarchy. The original polity of Islam was republican democracy where the head of the State must be chosen by the consensus of citizens. He must be the first servant of the State and have no special privileges. He must be subject to all the civil and criminal laws of the State. He is entitled to claim from the State only the essentials of a decent livelihood. The Prophet himself, the first head of the State, claimed even less than this and led the life of a poor man who was not always sure of his daily bread. The Caliphs that followed him immediately tried to follow his example. The second Caliph 'Umar said: 'The head of the State is like the guardian of orphans; if he has means of his own he should avoid getting any remuneration for his guardianship, but if he is himself in want, he may take only bare sustenance and no more'. As he would have no court or courtiers, society would be rid of thousands of parasites.

Having repudiated the institution of monarchy, Islam turned its attention to another set of exploiters: the feudal lords who form a class of aristocracy or nobility. Islam arose in a country of large nomadic and a small agricultural population with a sprinkling of

traders in its few towns. The tribes lived in a state of primitive equality and democracy. Arabia had no aristocratic tradition except that some tribes considered themselves superior to others as, for instance, the Quraish who claimed special privileges as servants of the Ka'ba. Having obtained dominion over the rich lands of Persia, Syria and Egypt, the conquerors could have easily made themselves feudal lords with immense estates reducing the large agricultural populations of these domains to the conditions of serfs. During the time of 'Umar a number of influential Arabs wanted him to partition these lands among the Muslims as the spoils of war. They quoted the example of tribal wars during the time of the Prophet. But 'Umar was steadfast in upholding the spirit of Islam. He refused to grant a single acre of land to any Muslim from the conquered dominions. Ultimately he carried his decision that all conquered land shall belong to the State but shall continue to be cultivated by the erstwhile cultivators, paying only equitable rent to the State. No cultivator shall be considered as owner in his own right, though he shall be given a guarantee of not being evicted so long as he tills the soil properly and pays the dues to the State. This is the first example in history of legally nationalising almost all cultivable land in a major part of an extensive dominion. In this manner original Islam prevented the creation of a landed aristocracy.

But even if large tracts of land had been granted to the early Muslims, feudalism and large-scale landlordism could not have developed. The Islamic law of inheritance would have split up these large estates within a generation or two into small peasant-proprietorships. Feudalism and holding of large estates is possible only with the law of primogeniture according to which only the eldest son inherits the entire estate to the total exclusion of other heirs, who have to shift for themselves. Once someone pointed out to Dr. Johnson the injustice of this institution to which he replied in a jocose manner that there was one special advantage in it that it made

only one fool in the family, who is bound to become silly for not being obliged to make any efforts for his living. Islam prevented the creation of such do-nothing, extravagant fools. The law and spirit of Islam did not always operate everywhere in subsequent centuries. In some countries as, for instance, in India under the British, the government granted large *Jagirs* and allowed them to remain undivided. The British courts also encouraged landlords to deprive their daughters of inheritance in land if the landlords pleaded customary law as preferable for them to the Islamic *Shari'at*. After the British left and the Muslims had the opportunity to act according to Islam they re-established the Islamic *Shari'at* about inheritance in land. The Prophet of Islam did not definitely prohibit landlordism and enjoined on the landlords to do justice to the tenants, but he was unhappy about the system of landlordism and advised his followers to hold only as much land as they could cultivate themselves, and, if they had more than that, it was advisable to give it away to others or leave it as it was preferable to exploiting the labour of a tenant. But it is a definite Islamic injunction that any tract of land lying uncultivated for three years shall be taken over by the State.

The spirit of the Qur'anic teaching is that land is like the other free gifts of God; it is created for the benefit of all humanity. Any system of ownership which prevents the maximum utilisation of land for productive purposes would be against the injunctions and the spirit of Islam. Land is not like other commodities owned by an individual. A person may possess some articles of furniture or dress which he never uses and no law would take it away from him, but land which is not being properly used can be lawfully taken away from the owner. This means that, according to Islam, the owner of land is a kind of trustee for the community. If the community comes to the conclusion that owing to a particular system of use or abuse the land is not yielding as much as it should or could, the State has a right to step in. The

Prophet had granted Bilal a large tract of land which he was later on found to be unable to cultivate. 'Umar forced him to give it up. For all kinds of socialism the ownership of land is a vital problem. Islam has definite injunctions against landlordism or retention of large estates intact.

As under the Islamic system land would necessarily be partitioned after the demise of an owner, big landlordism would find no place. On the other hand, after partition through inheritance, males as well as females having a prescribed share, there would crop up danger of the fragmentation of holdings. This can be prevented by legislation prescribing the size of a minimum holding, one person or one family owning a minimum holding by paying off the other heirs in convenient instalments. Egypt has already passed such legislation and other Muslim countries are bound to follow her during the course of agrarian reforms that are being rapidly effected in all Muslim lands. Muslim peasant-proprietors may be encouraged by the State in the interests of increased production to adopt a system of co-operative farming. The Russian method of forced collectivisation by total expropriation entailed untold misery and caused a terrible famine, with large-scale destruction of livestock. After doing great violence to human nature, Russia has now guaranteed a kind of collective ownership to the families working on a collective farm. They shall now have a right to continue as partners in the same collective farm along with the concession of holding a strip of land and some livestock in absolute private ownership.

Another revolutionary step in the process of establishing a classless society was the abolition of priesthood as a caste and a privileged class. This class, having been recognised as the monopolist of spirituality and salvation, acquired economic advantages at the same time. Churches, temples and monasteries became centres of wealth and a large horde of priests which took no part in economic production lived comfortably and parasitically on the labours of the working classes. The priests became allies of ruling groups and both classes

established a condominium. A very large portion of land in Europe belonged to the Church and fees of a great variety were levied upon the people. The Brahmanic caste in India also acquired great power which it continues to wield even to-day. Enormous amounts of gold, silver and jewels are still hoarded in Indian temples; they possess treasures in comparison with which the fabulous wealth of some of the Indian princes is put in the shade. Greek and Roman temples also were very rich in their possessions. The freethinkers even in classical times considered the priests as thieves and parasites. It is said about Diogenes the Cynic that he saw a group of people going through the street having taken someone in custody. On inquiry, he was told that they were priests who had caught a person stealing gold cups from the temples. He remarked sneeringly: 'The bigger thieves have caught a smaller thief!' Islam abolished temples as well as priests. Places of worship may be built where people should gather to pray to God in a congregation without any professional priest working as intermediary. Anyone considered more learned or more noble than the rest should lead the prayers. But for prayers mosques are not essential. The Prophet said that it is one of the special traits of our religion that every clean place on God's earth is our mosque; we can offer our prayers everywhere because God is everywhere. The Prophet himself was not a professional high priest; he undertook to do all kinds of work: private, communal or administrative. Any Muslim could be a shepherd, a farmer, a craftsman, a soldier and a religious servant or an official of the State at the same time. A Roman citizen having visited Medina reported to his people the astounding fact that he had seen a people who were cavaliers during the day and monks during the night. The Qur'an noticed the fact how professional priests exploited the people economically:

Most surely many of the doctors of law and monks eat away the property of men falsely (ix. 34).

Another great source of economic exploitation and

tyranny was usury. The usurers everywhere were callous, blood-suckers, fattening themselves on the life-blood of the poor and the needy. Large portions of population were enslaved by them: anyone who could not pay his debts with exorbitant, compound interest sold himself as a slave to the creditor. Some time this kind of bondage was passed on to his descendants who could not be free until all the debt was paid. The moral sense of prophets and philosophers had always revolted against this tyranny but there is no example in history in which the prophet of a great religion and a great State fought more systematically and more successfully against this evil than the Prophet of Islam. Prohibition of usury by Islam was so categorical that no loophole was left to practise it in disguised forms. It was vagueness about grasping the real nature of interest and lukewarmness in applying the injunction which made this evil continue in all societies in one form or the other. Take, for instance, Plato. He says in the *Laws*: 'No one shall lend money upon interest', but later on in the same book he weakens the force of this injunction by permitting interest as a penalty for delay:

And let him who, having already received the work in exchange, does not pay the price in the time agreed, pay double the price; and if a year has elapsed, although interest is not to be taken on loans, yet for every drachma which he owes to the contractor let him pay a monthly interest of an obol (*The Dialogues of Plato, Vol. 5, p. 124*).

As obol was one-sixth of a drachma, this was equivalent to an interest rate of 200% yearly. This is the tragedy of a great philosopher attempting to become a practical law-giver. Now let us see how his great pupil, Aristotle, fares in this respect. His condemnation of interest on the ground that money does not breed is well known, but it is worthwhile giving a full quotation:

'The most hated sort of wealth-getting, and with the greatest reason, is usury which makes a gain out of money itself, and not from the natural object of it. For money was intended to be used in exchange, but not to increase at interest. And this term interest,

which means the birth of money from money, is applied to the breeding of money because the offspring resembles the parent. Wherefore of all modes of getting wealth this is the most unnatural (*The Works of Aristotle*, Vol. 9, 'Politics').

Some of those who have commented on Aristotle's dictum argue that his argument could be valid about charging of interest on loans made for unproductive purposes. In the ancient world it was very rarely that money was borrowed on interest for productive purposes; generally needy people wanted money to finance consumption. Money borrowed for productive purposes does breed by increasing production, so why should not the lender be entitled to a share in the increase to which his capital has contributed? This seems very plausible but there is one great flaw in this. It is not necessary that money borrowed with the expectation of increased productivity should actually in all cases produce profits. The lender would insist on his pound of flesh whatever be the plight of the one who has suffered a loss. Islam wanted to create a society based on fraternal feelings; morality must have a preference over legality. If the borrower is legally bound to pay a fixed rate of interest, the lender secures his own grain irrespective of what happens to the one who borrowed in good faith for productive purposes but circumstances beyond his control caused a loss. Islam allowed that capital and labour may co-operate on equitable terms to increase trade and production, but the gains and losses should be shared. It must not be a one-way traffic. In the Roman empire also, money-lending on interest was a common practice. Whenever its evil became rampant, it was sometimes limited to a minimum rate and at other times abolished by law, but as there were no religious sanctions behind these provisions and the State did not enforce its decrees very strictly, evasions were very common. It was Islam only that acted with a firm conviction that it was not a kind of evil that could be controlled or mended; it must be ended. The code of Justinian classified loans and regulated interest permitting higher

rates when money was borrowed for productive uses; for non-payment on contracted dates, penal interest of very high rates was also allowed as had been recommended earlier by Plato. Justinian's laws also did not prove to be sovereign remedies and relentless usury continued under various forms. The Catholic Church also turned its attention to this evil and considered it as an un-Christian practice but the Church dealt only in half measures. The great Council of Nicae convened by Emperor Constantine in 325 forbade usury to the clergy subject to the penalty of loss of office but it left the laity free to indulge in it only with a slight moral disapproval. Sometimes energetic measures were adopted but again with the passage of time and change of circumstances they were relaxed and became ineffective. It was finally in 1311 that Pope Clement V declared all secular legislation about usury null and void and interest-taking was branded as a heretical and sinful practice. As the Church was adopting lenient and rigorous attitudes at various periods, the sinfulness of usury was never brought home to the Christian world as it was in the case of the Muslim world where the prohibitions were definite and uncompromising allowing no camouflaged forms or expediencies. Similar was the case with the Jews. They were enjoined to take no interest from their own brother waxen poor or fallen in decay. To thy poor brother, 'thou shalt not give him the money upon usury, nor lend him thy victual for increase' (*Leviticus*, 25, 35-37).

From this the Jews may have concluded that a poor brother Jew must not be fleeced by usury but there was no harm in taking interest from the well-to-do and the rich. There again the abomination of usury as intrinsically evil could not be realised by the Israelites when they were told by their Scripture that 'Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury' (*Deuteronomy*, 23, 19-20). As contrasted with this, when Islam considered an evil as so atrocious that it tended to destroy common humanity, it would not allow its practice even in small

measures and would not limit its reforms within closed fraternities. When Islam launched the campaign against usury in all its forms, it made no distinction between trade interest or interest for productive purposes and interest on loans incurred by the poor and the needy. The usurer said that interest was like trade. Islam said: No, the two are radically different. Then they said interest increases wealth. Islam said that, looked at closely, its tendencies are not productive but destructive.

Those who swallow down usury cannot rise except as one whom the devil has prostrated by his touch does rise. That is because they say, Trading is only like usury; and Allah has allowed trading and forbidden usury (ii. 275).

Allah does not bless usury, but causes charity to prosper (ii. 276).

The Qur'an says that he who insists on usury wages war against God and His Prophet which meant undermining the social fabric and sabotaging the State:

O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to) Allah and relinquish what remains due from usury if you are believers. But if you do it not, then be apprised of war from Allah and His Apostle (ii. 278).

One of the greatest economists of modern times has moved in the direction of Islam with respect to the question of interest. Until recently most economists believed that it was impossible for modern economy to work without interest but Keynes has asserted with all the profundity of his knowledge that interest can be and ought to be reduced to lower and lower rates until it touches the zero level. He has not argued from the moral points of view as economists are not expected to moralise, nor has he used arguments based on exploitation. His view is that a modern industrial State would stand to gain and run no risks if there is no interest. It was generally said by economists that if there were no interest, people would not invest. Keynes says: 'People invest not for income in the way of interest but for speculative gains and capital appreciation.' Speculation in productive investments would continue regardless of the interest rate and even though interest were non-existent. According to Keynes, the rate of interest is purely

conventional and, given suitable methods, could be lowered indefinitely. Savings can take place on a scale adequate to bring about and retain a zero rate of interest, thus making it possible for interest-free capital to be supplied for every use in which it may be desired. He was, however, of opinion that because of the institutional factors that militate against it, a reduction of interest to lower and lower levels would have to proceed by easy stages. Economists generally avoid any appeal to ethical or religious motives but Keynes is so convinced of the desirability of reducing interest even unto a zero point that he recommends that the old religious sentiments against usury should be reawakened to stabilise economy without interest. The Prophet of Islam asserted that interest would not increase national wealth nor conduce to social well-being. Some of the great modern economists have begun to look at it with the same eyes. Owing to the capitalistic industrialism of the last two centuries, the economy of even less developed nations is so entangled with a system of banking based on interest that nations cannot see their way to disentangle themselves from the system which has cast its net far and wide. Even Muslim countries which abhorred the taking or giving of interest on the basis of clear Qur'anic injunctions have been compelled to fall in line with this detested system. Some of their financiers and thinkers have tried to justify this lapse either on the grounds of inexorable necessity or pleading a differentiation between usury and interest, considering only the former to be prohibited by Islam. But, according to the clear teaching of Islam, this distinction is not justified. In this respect the teaching of Islam has an analogy with the prohibition against alcoholic drinks. Islam came to the conclusion that alcohol is a poison for the individual and social organism. So taking the general welfare of society into consideration, even taking of alcohol in small quantities was not allowed. A little concession about a radical evil has the tendency to degenerate into a general licence. The Muslim countries living mostly

in the pre-industrial stage were overwhelmed by industrial capitalism and imperialism which was only another aspect of it. When they tried to rehabilitate themselves on modern lines they had only the models of prevalent Western capitalism before their eyes to imitate blindly in the initial stages. But now some Muslims are determined to reshape their social, political and economic life according to the fundamentals of Islam and are seriously thinking of establishing their finance and general economy on the basis of procuring and utilising interest-free capital. As yet the discussion is in the academic stage but I am sure the Muslim countries shall continue to explore all avenues of an Islamic approach. If they follow the Islamic trends persistently, then most of the essential investments in vital industries and public utilities will be financed from general State savings or on the basis of share capital. The individual will invest his savings in important productive concerns with the expectation of getting a share in profits. The profits will naturally fluctuate with the change of conditions and so fixed rates of interest will not be allowed. In this way all undertakings will have a co-operative basis. Islam is not averse to private savings and private capital which, if honestly acquired, should represent labour in a concentrated and transferable form. What it objects to is the division of society into borrowers and lenders, the latter creating security and prosperity for themselves, irrespective of what happens to the former or what disturbs the general well-being. Maybe a renaissance Islam is able to create a social structure economically and ethically more sound than *laissez-faire* capitalism or collectivism. Islam welcomes co-operative efforts in comparison with cut-throat competition of everyone for himself and devil take the hindmost. But it is a creed of moderation and of idealistic realism which strives for the realisation of ideals without doing undue violence to the individuality or personality of those engaged in the task. Human life has an egoistic as well as an altruistic aspect and genuine well-being is the synthesis of

these two essential aspects. Islam does not prohibit the holding of private property or the accumulation of private capital altogether, but all rights are subject to duties or, as the Muslim classical jurists say, there is no right in which Allah has not a share. Allah, in Islamic jurisprudence, is taken to mean public weal. Private ownership is not absolute; it cannot be permitted if it stands in the way of general well-being. Wherever there is exploitation of labour, the State would step in to remedy it. In the Islamic system land, like everything else, may be bought and sold but the State can prescribe limits of maximum and minimum holdings. Land rent, if it is fixed, irrespective of what produce a tenant gets during a year, would be cognate to fixed interest on capital which Islam does not allow. But the system of *batai* between landlord and tenant, where, whatever the crop brings, is shared according to a contract which is equitable, would be allowed, because here co-operation between capital and labour is allowable. Again, if the share of the tiller is inadequate, it may be regulated by the State. Similarly, if co-operative farming would be more productive, landlords and tenants may be persuaded to enter into a co-operative scheme without expropriation of individual rights. Large estates not justifiably acquired or not properly cultivated may be expropriated. This slight digression into the land problem was necessitated for clearing the point raised by some critics, that there is no difference between fixed land rent and interest, and why should Islam allow one and prohibit the other? Islam prohibits all such transactions in which all the profit is secured by one party and all the risk is faced by the other party.

Now we pass on from the problem of interest to another important tenet of Islam, called *Zakat*, which is a tax on capital of various types which has accumulated as a surplus at the end of every year. Islam inculcates industry and deprecates extravagance which means that an able-bodied worker, trader or industrialist will have some surpluses in gold or silver or money or goods

of various kinds, which have remained over after satisfying all natural needs. These surpluses, as a right, belong to the individuals whose fruits of effort they represent. But here again this right to ownership is not absolute; out of this a percentage must be handed over to the State to be utilised mainly for the benefits of the needy who have, somehow, been handicapped in the race of life. In a society which allows private property and individual initiative in all the walks of life, differences in acquisitions are bound to occur, but Islam says that these differences must not be allowed to create classes of the rich and the poor with an unpassable social gulf between them. Efforts must be made to level up and level down by methods which the people should believe to be moral and spiritual. Out of the funds secured by tax or surpluses the needy shall be rehabilitated by gifts and interest-free loans. Lest anyone feel proud and self-righteous in bestowing charity, the Qur'an says (li. 19) that the needy have a right on the wealth of the rich:

And in their wealth
Is the right of him
Who asks, and him
Who is needy.

And to illustrate this the Prophet is reported to have said that after all the wealth and comforts of the rich are the products of the labours of the poor.

It is a principle laid down in the Qur'an that economic life should be so organised that wealth does not circulate only among the rich:

Whatever Allah has restored to His Apostle from the people of the towns, it is for Allah and for the Apostle and for the near of the kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, so that it may not be a thing taken by turns among the rich of you only (lix. 7).

National wealth is like blood in an organism; it should not create plethora in one part and atrophy in another part. Islam desired to mould the economic life of society in such a manner that antagonistic class-divisions of millionaires and paupers should not come into existence.

The Prophet did not approve of private dispensation of charity and he envisaged a state of affairs in which a person would walk through the land with charity to offer but would find none who would receive it. All his efforts were directed towards the creation of a classless society; at first with the gradual emancipation of slaves and the elimination of pauperism. All surpluses should come to the State in prescribed proportions and administered by the State, so that no individual should feel any shame in being obliged to receive charity at private hands. He considered it as the duty of the State that if it possesses enough resources, no citizen should be deprived of the fundamental needs of life. During the reign of his successor, 'Umar the Great, a register was kept of all the citizens of the State and every child born began to receive a sustenance allowance. The Qur'an inculcates leniency and kindness to those who ask for alms but the Prophet persuaded beggars to try to earn their living. He said that the beggar 'loses his face'; 'on the day of Judgement there will be no flesh on his face' (Abu Da'ud, *Kitab al-Zakat*).

It is stated in the *Sahih* of Bukhari that a man came to the Prophet asking for charity. The Prophet asked him if he possessed any article and the man replied that he had only a cap. He was asked to bring it. The Prophet auctioned his cap for two or three dirhams with which the blade of an axe was purchased. The Prophet himself fixed a handle to it and told the man to go and cut wood to sell as fuel. He was asked to report his condition after a few days which he did. The man reported with joy that he was satisfying all his needs and also saving something. The Prophet desired all men to be workers—the rich as well as the poor. He said: 'The worker is the friend of God' (*Musnid*, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal).

To the employer of a worker he inculcated that wages are to be paid before the sweat of the worker is dry. To the owners of the slaves he preached the great merit of emancipation but, according to his companion Abu Dhar, the masters were required to feed and clothe their

employees and slaves as they fed and clothed themselves.

With respect to the necessities of life and the duty of the State to provide for them, the ideal of Islamic society is presented by a Muslim classical author of great authority and great repute. We propose to give in this chapter a broad outline of the teachings of Islam as presented by Ibn Hazm in his famous work *al-Muhalla*.

Ibn Hazm deals boldly with the question that raised a controversy among the followers of the Prophet shortly after him. It is said in the Holy Book that people want guidance about how much and what proportion of their income and assets they must part with to be spent on the poor and the general needs of society. The reply given in the Holy Book is: 'Whatever is left over after meeting your legitimate expenses'. The word used in the Qur'an is *Afu*, meaning surplus. There are scathing verses in the Qur'an about the hoarders that they shall be branded with their gold pieces made red-hot with hell-fire. Usurers and hoarders are treated equally as the enemies of God, which means enemies of society, according to the accepted interpretation of Muslim jurists. During the time of the Prophet, the Arabs in general and the Muslims in particular were very poor; there were few among them who could be called moderately well-to-do, even according to their low standards. But with the sudden conquest of rich neighbouring lands like Persia, Syria and Egypt, wealth poured in, which was undreamt-of by the Arabs of the desert or the towns. The rich began to live luxuriously and even to hoard, paying to the State only the compulsory Zakat, the capital levy which was two and a half per cent of cash or gold or silver which had remained with the owner for a whole year (jewels and jewelry excepted). While the prosperous Muslims were thanking Allah for having rewarded them even materially in this world there were men like the bold and pious friend of the Prophet, Abu Dhar, who stood up in violent protest, saying that Islam was being sabotaged by luxurious livers and hoarders. Those who possessed wealth and those in authority did

not agree with him. He was exiled from Damascus at the request of the governor Mu'awiyah, and even in Medina he was asked to live some miles outside the city so that his socialistic interpretation of Islam may not disturb the now prosperous society. It was argued against him that the Qur'an had ordained that after paying the Zakat tax, which on the whole was nominal, the surplus of a Muslim's wealth is sanctified. Abu Dhar's contention was that society must not become stratified into the rich and the poor and so long as the elementary needs of all citizens are not adequately met, keeping back of hoarded wealth by the rich is a kind of theft, feeling very much like the socialist of thirteen centuries later, the famous Proudhon, whose phrase, 'la propriete c'est vole', has become classical with all social levellers of modern times.

Centuries after the first Muslim socialist, Abu Dhar, we find Ibn Hazm taking up the question again quoting chapter and verse from the Holy Book, and the sayings of the illustrious companions and successors of the Prophet to prove his thesis that Islam wanted the abolition of poverty and indigence, and demanded spreading out of the national wealth. Islam allows private property but the right to it is not absolute. Ibn Hazm's views are, in a way, an anticipation of the Beveridge Plan of fundamental material security for all citizens.

Let us reproduce first the authorities that he quotes. He says on the authority of Sha'bi, Mujahid and Ta'us that all of them agree that society has a claim on the wealth of the rich, even after they have paid the Zakat tax (*al-Muhallah*, Part 6, p. 156).

Then a similar statement is added on the basis of as great an authority as Ibn 'Umar:

If Zakat tax is insufficient to meet the needs of the poor, then it is the duty of the rich of every town to put the poor on their feet (*al-Muhallah*, Part 6, p. 156).

The Qur'an uses the word *Huq*, the right of the poor; so what the wealthy man is asked to give is not charity but that which, as a matter of right, should come back

to the poor who, as a matter of fact, by their labour are creators of the national wealth. Many quotations are given by Ibn Hazm from the Holy Book in which the words the 'right of the poor' are used instead of an equivalent word for charity. Muhammad, the son of the great 'Ali, relates from his father that he said: 'God has prescribed it as a duty for the rich to see that no citizens are left indigent without having the elementary needs of life satisfied. If there are any who keep back their hoarded wealth while some fellow-citizens are going hungry and naked and living in misery, then they would deserve the wrath of God'. Compare it with the famous words of the great American Jefferson who said: 'I tremble with fear for my nation when I think that God is just' (he was referring to the misery of the slaves in the U.S.A.).

The great 'Umar is quoted as saying at a late period in his Khilafat that if he had known before what he knew then about the equalitarian spirit of Islam, he would have taken as many surpluses from the rich by force as would satisfy the basic needs of the have-nots. The glorious example of the Muslim 'Helpers' of Medina, sharing their assets with the Muhajirin, the refugees from Mecca, was before the eyes of 'Umar and forms a pattern for voluntary levelling for all times to come.

Ibn Hazm then proceeds on to define the basic needs of every citizen of an Islamic State:

- (1) Food that is sufficient to maintain one's body in proper health and strength.
- (2) Clothing that is requisite for winter and summer.
- (3) Shelter that protects from weather and affords privacy.

As to the prohibition of keeping surpluses while fellow-citizens are in dire need, Ibn Hazm quotes another saying of the Prophet related by Abi Sa'id Khudri: 'The Prophet said: "Whoever has an extra camel, let him give it to him who has it not and needs it; whoever has surplus food, let him give it to him who is without it." The Prophet went on talking about parting with

surpluses of various kinds until we came to believe that we are being taught that no one has any right to any surplus.'

Ibn Hazm then proceeds to deal with the question of the power of the State exercised in the spreading out of national wealth. He first deals with the right of the needy individual against another who has a surplus. He says that if a person is dying of thirst or hunger and the person possessing water and food refuses to help him, the hungry or the thirsty man has a right to take it by force. Most jurists before Ibn Hazm had mentioned only extreme thirst as a justification for individual violence. He criticises them and says that if thirst justifies it, why not starvation or lack of covering which might prove equally fatal. If a person snatching these things by force from a callous possessor is killed, the latter should be liable to be prosecuted for murder; if the withholder is killed in the struggle, then the curse of God be on him because he prevented someone from the exercise of a rightful claim. It is high treason against God to prevent anyone from exercising legitimate rights. Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, fought a war to crush those who would not pay Zakat meant for the poor. Ibn Hazm thinks that that justifies violence against those who withhold surpluses while poverty and misery still exist. A Communist preaching class-war and violence and forcible expropriation of all capital and all lands would feel very jubilant reading these authoritative versions of Islam and would consider it good propaganda to ask the Muslims to rise in the name of Islam and dispossess all those who have any surpluses. Some naïve Muslims may be deceived but those who know the total pattern of Islamic life and are conversant with the basic principles of its ideology cannot be easily trapped. What Ibn Hazm is saying can be properly understood only in the total setting of Islam. In the Islamic system, capitalism, feudalism and landlordism that the Communists desire to overthrow cannot develop as I have argued in this book in more than one place. Islam allows private

property and personal initiative and does not envisage a totalitarian State arrogating all rights to itself and leaving the individual at the mercy and in the callous servitude of an impersonal regimenting machine. Communists compel everyone to subscribe to the same ideology; Islam does not. Islam is satisfied with the essentials of morality and social justice that should form a common basis between the conformists and the nonconformists alike. People are free to believe as they please and work as they please provided their work is not of an immoral or anti-social nature. People can earn wealth with honest efforts and enjoy its fruits, but the fundamental principle of Islamic economics as enunciated in the Holy Book is the circulation of national wealth in all classes. But Islam knew that in spite of all the checks on the concentration of wealth, private property and initiative being allowed, a disequilibrium might be created needing restoration. When such a disequilibrium is created by natural or economic forces, then it is the duty of the State to try to restore the equilibrium. Individual liberty cannot be completely sacrificed, because it is the basis of all values, nor should the organic unity of the social organism be jeopardised.

The supreme example before Muslims is the society created by the Prophet and the State organised by him. It was a society of freemen; slavery was still there as a cursed institution, but as it could not be abolished at a stroke, the Prophet chalked out a programme of the emancipation of slaves pleading for extremely humane, almost equalitarian, treatment of them till this blot on humanity be completely erased. The rights of the slaves were prescribed by law and the Muslims were enjoined to feed and clothe them as they fed and clothed themselves, the result being that later on in Muslim history slaves became commanders, ministers and founders of dynasties. In Muhammad's vision there was to be ultimately only a society of freemen.

At the end, let us mention another exploited class of human beings to whom Islam did much greater justice

than was ever done by any social system. In no pre-Islamic civilised society women had any civic and economic status. They were given away in marriage without their consent, they could not hold property in their own name and they had no share in inheritance; on the other hand, they themselves were inherited along with other chattel. Islam gave them an independent, legal and economic status. Islam allowed a woman to marry exercising her independent choice and, if the marriage proved unsuccessful by the husband not fulfilling his marital duties, or incapacity to perform them, she could seek divorce. Islam made marriage a civil contract between man and wife in which all legitimate conditions could be inserted, including the right of divorce on her part. She could seek divorce even on the basis of complete incompatibility of temperament. The Prophet himself allowed couples to separate if they felt intolerably unhappy. She has a right to hold property in her own name and to keep her earnings to herself. She could inherit from her parents and relations from the parental side; she could also inherit at the same time from her husband and her own children. To give her an independent, economic status, a dower suitable to her status had to be paid to her by the husband. The unpaid dower of the wife is the first charge on the husband's assets having priority over all the rest of his liabilities. Has any socialist society granted women any greater rights? As late as 1885 even a British woman could not hold property in her own name and at her marriage all her property passed to the husband. Women all over the world are struggling to snatch their elementary human rights from unwilling male hands. Hindu women in India are striving to gain the rights of independent marriage and divorce on rational grounds and are also claiming a share in inheritance. In a number of Western countries they still suffer from invidious distinctions. No woman, for instance, can be elected to any legislature in Switzerland nor does the Catholic Church allow divorce. Even in non-Catholic churches the conditions for divorce are

extremely irrational. Islam's ideal of creating a classless society by the abolition of all irrational and unnatural privileges would not have succeeded if the legal and economic disabilities of sex had not been removed. The Qur'an summed up this equalisation of rights and duties by a simple injunction that women have rights over men as men have rights over them. A civilisation should be judged by its treatment of women. Judged by that criterion Islamic civilisation at its best offers an example of great value. If certain individuals or certain Muslim countries have refused to practise the injunctions of Islam, it does not detract from the beauty of the equalitarian teachings of Islam in the matter of sexes.

The Foundations of Islamic Economics

IT is believed universally as an axiom by almost all the followers of all great religions except Islam that religion deals exclusively with the life of the spirit or life in the other world. Every religion is supposed to enunciate certain broad, ethical and spiritual attitudes and leaves human beings to model their social and economic existence as best as they can. The Christians say: 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's', thus creating a dualism of duties that are generally conflicting. Buddhism also said 'No' to life and idealised the life of the *Bhikshu*, the monk who preached charity and asked for charity. For such basically ascetic creeds there was an antagonism between the flesh and the spirit, or between the mundane and supra-mundane world. Phenomena were classified as natural and supernatural, and it was preached that the concern of religion and religious life is with the supernatural; physical or material nature is to be ignored or suppressed. Such creeds did not possess the vision of the basic harmony and unity of all existence where there are gradations of high and low, and differences of the transient and the abiding, but there are no unbridgable gulfs and gaping gaps. Islam is the only creed which taught the doctrine of the basic unity of all existence, the unity of creation following as a necessary corollary from the unity of the Creator. The Holy Qur'an taught Muslims to seek God not in supra-rational mystical dogmas but in the ordinary phenomena of the nature within and the nature without. It taught that there is no antagonism between appearance and reality

because God Himself essentially is appearance and reality at the same time. There is repeated reference in the Qur'an to the beauty, harmony and orderliness of all existence. Contrary to all ascetic creeds, Islam taught that all existence and all life is a blessing and a gift for which man ought to be thankful. Nature is so constituted that it can be rationally understood and made subservient to the realm of ends. This infinite and glorious world was not created in vain and not brought into being for being discarded and renounced. Man has been divinely endowed with instincts which have not to be suppressed but controlled and put to their proper uses. Says the Holy Book:

Man is made to be attracted by women and children, heaps of gold and silver, well-bred and trained horses, cattle and crops (iii. 13).

But he is mistaken if he thinks that these things by themselves can bestow on him immortality (civ. 1-9).

The purpose of creation, according to the Qur'anic teaching, is that, following prescribed laws, it should be capable of subserving higher and higher ends. The Qur'an mentions only casually Adam's disobedience to a Divine command but lays emphasis on the fact that, having regained equilibrium by repentance, man became capable of making the whole order of Nature serve him. The agencies of God, the angels, are made to bow to him and the entire universe can be controlled by him through knowledge and appropriate action.

God made the sun and the moon subservient to you (xiv. 33).
All that the earth contains is created for your benefit (ii. 29).

This is an invitation for scientific research and exploitation of all natural resources. The resources of Nature and its potentialities are infinite, so the scope of human progress has no bounds. Carlyle was talking in unison with the spirit of Islam when he said that the whole universe co-operates to make a blade of grass grow.

In the words of Nietzsche, Islam said 'Yes' to life and asked its followers to benefit by it to the full extent in such a manner that physical life too is spiritualised.

Eat of all the pleasant and pure things that God has bestowed on you (v. 4).

This verse is repeated with some verbal variations many times in the Qur'an. The Qur'an does not stop only at the purely biological necessity of enjoying the fruits of the earth; along with food man must love beauty which is the food of the soul.

Say, who has prohibited to man the things of beauty which God created for His servants, besides pure food (vii. 32).

Along with physical needs, aesthetic appreciation is also recommended; beauty is created to be appreciated.

There is beauty in the movements of the cattle when they go out for pasture in the morning and when they return home in the evening (xvi. 6).

In other places too the Book mentions beauty along with mere physical utility.

Religion, before Islam, was considered to be purely an other-worldly affair; it was a revolution in the religious attitude when the seekers after God were told:

Forget not to take thy due share from this world (xxviii. 77).

Marxism says that life and culture are primarily material and economic in their origin and purpose. It represents a swing from hollow spiritualism to gross materialism. As in everything else, Islam followed the middle path. It recognised the physical basis of the material aspects of human existence. It exhorted man to understand matter and actualise its immense potentialities. Islam agrees with the Marxist dictum that man has to eat before he lives, but it also agrees with the dictum of Christ that man does not live by bread alone. The Marxist concept of life is too narrow and its narrowness makes its half-truth almost as bad as untruth. When Marxism revolted against dogmatic and orthodox Christianity and called religion the opium of the people, it committed the mistake of identifying true religion with its garbled and corrupt version. What has Marxism to teach the Muslim about the reality of matter and the

importance of physical nature for the cultural life of man? If all religions were the opium of the people, the Muslims, following the original momentum of Islam, could not have led the world in the creation of a culture that comprehended all aspects at the same time: physical, intellectual, aesthetical and psychical, and released the pent-up energies of humanity in all directions. There are religions that are other-worldly and there are creeds like Marxism which are purely this-worldly creeds. According to Islam, both are one-sided and false. Islam expressly forbade asceticism as a way of religious life but at the same time forbade its followers to identify all existence with physical realities and physical urges. All lower aspects have to be idealised by serving higher purposes. Man has to live on the earth, benefit by its resources, actualise its potentialities but not be earth-rooted. The roots of his self are in God, the source and goal of all existence; all life must be God-rooted.

Modern technologists say that modern civilisation is based, to a considerable extent, on steel. The Holy Qur'an anticipated the modern technologists in pointing to steel as a material conferring great strength and benefits on mankind:

And We created steel which is very hard, and it contains a variety of benefits for mankind (lvii. 25).

Islam also urged mankind not to be content with seeking God's gifts on the surface of the earth but to dive down deep into it to extract beneficial elements hidden in its entrails (*Kanz al-'Ummal*). 'Besides the earth, dive down into the sea to take out fish for food and pearls for ornament.' Man is also urged to industry and manufacture. The Qur'an is the great admirer of ships that ply on the seven seas and establish communication between nations and countries.

How the ship tears its way through the waves that rise like mountains! (xi. 42).

Some prophets like David are admired for their skill and craftsmanship who made coats of mails with rings

of steel. Solomon is admired for employing artists, craftsmen and workers for making fortresses, statues and huge cauldrons fixed in the earth. Many other prophets of Israel are mentioned exercising various kinds of skill.

Marxism has claimed to be the first creed which has conferred on the workers self-respect and dignity, and it is claimed that all religions before it were unjust to the worker and exploited him. This is a mis-statement of facts. The Prophet of Islam remained a worker all his life. It was he who said: 'The worker is the friend of God', and the most honourable sustenance is not what is got from exploitation and unearned income but it is that which a man's own hands have procured and a Hadith in the *Sahih* of Bukhari is found to this effect, praising David for earning his living with the work of his own hands.

Islam emphasised the fact that man is a social creature and no individual can seek his salvation or develop his personality in isolation. Moral principles are essential both for personal and for social well-being, but these moral principles should not be inculcated merely in an abstract manner. Prophets, the moral geniuses of humanity, must act as guides in social organisation. Islamic prayers are congregational, and so is the pilgrimage to Mecca an international congregation. Prayer is good but only prayer is not enough for human well-being. A man who only prays and does nothing else develops neither his own personality nor contributes to social well-being. Therefore the injunction of the Holy Qur'an is:

When you have finished your prayers then disperse to seek the grace of God in work and trade (lxii 10).

Most of the commentators have interpreted the words 'seeking the grace of God' as trade. The communistic system stigmatises trade as unjust and therefore all private trading is disallowed except trade in small commodities, like fruits, vegetables, eggs, etc., and that too within very limited bounds. One of the main differences between the communistic and Islamic systems of economics is that Islam sanctions trade if there is no fraud or gambling or exploitation involved in it.

O men of faith! do not devour the goods of one another with injustice but trade based on mutual agreement and goodwill is allowed (iv. 29).

We have already mentioned this special trait of Islam that worldly activities are joined on to religious worship to demonstrate the organic and unitary nature of human life. The Qur'an allows trade even during the days of the Great Pilgrimage.

There is no harm in your trading while ye are engaged in pilgrimage (ii. 198).

In the beginning the Muslims thought that perhaps the seeking of worldly goods would contaminate their worship but Islam, the creed of integration, assured them that there was no harm in it. In Soviet Russia almost all trade is taken out of private hands and things are sold not by traders but by government agents. How could a Muslim cease to consider honest trading as immoral when the Prophet of Islam himself engaged in trade and set an example to all honest traders? As he was a worker and loved the workers, so he was once a trader and never ceased to admire the honest traders. He is reported to have said: 'A truthful and honest trader belongs to the class of prophets, men of truth and martyrs' (Tirmidhi, *Abwab al-Buyu'*). He specially recommended trade in cloth, for he was of opinion that it is a trade in an essential commodity which is conducive to human welfare. There are other sayings of the Prophet in which trade is described as a source of livelihood for a considerable portion of humanity. It appears, however, that although the Prophet of Islam not only sanctioned trade but admired the honest trader, he had a much greater love for workers who worked with their hands. It is reported in *Asad al-Ghaba*, Tadhkara Sa'd Ansari, that one of the companions of the Prophet used to work with the spade and dark horny streaks developed in his palms. The Prophet asked him if there was any sort of writing on his palms. The companion replied that it was not writing but dark impressions of the spade handle because he

laboured on rocky ground to earn a living for his family. Hearing this, the Prophet kissed his hands. Is it possible to imagine a greater lover of labour and the labourer? The honest, industrious worker, the 'friend of God', was also the friend of the Prophet of God who was sent to teach to mankind the dignity of all human labour.

We see in all this teaching that Islam is not an other-worldly creed, asking men only to save their souls for the next world. It is a religion which teaches men how to live this life well, and well-being here and now creates all the spirituality that man needs. Man lives in a physical world and he has physical needs. All Nature is there as a vast field for his activities: he must work as well as pray, although any work well done is also a kind of prayer. Man's essential ideals are spiritual, the nature of all intrinsic values is super-individual. His spirit also, something *sui generis*, is linked with matter and with body; he is not a disembodied spirit. Honest physical and mental labour is the only means of keeping mind and body healthy. A religion which teaches such harmony of all human functions and inculcates the integration of all elements of life is poles apart from dialectical materialism and mere biologism. Islam does not close its eyes to the material and economic aspects of existence but the organisation of life at these levels is not the ultimate aim of existence. Materialism emphasises material necessities and material causes and stops there, but the life of the spirit has to treat them as stepping-stones for higher things.

To elucidate the basic principles of the economic^s of Islam, it is necessary to be clear about its attitude^{to} land and capital. We should begin with the land^g on which is more of a living issue in Islamic^{co} by the Prophet which are yet mainly unindustrialised.

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To elucidate the basic principles of the economics of Islam, it is necessary to be clear about its attitude to land and capital. We should begin with the land problem which is more of a living issue in Islamic countries which are yet mainly unindustrialised.

During the time of the Prophet various systems of land tenure were prevalent in his country. Ta'if had better and more cultivable land than any other part of Arabia. The Arabian peninsula was inhabited very sparsely by nomadic tribes for whom the problem of agricultural

tenures did not exist. It had happened shortly before the time of the Prophet that the tribes of Thaqif saw that Bani 'Amir who owned most of the land of Ta'if were not exploiting their agricultural resources and not benefiting from their fertile soil. As they could do so, they proposed to Bani 'Amir that if they were allowed to cultivate their lands as lessees, they would use their labour and share the produce half and half. Thus Bani 'Amir became landlords and the people of Thaqif became their tenants. For some time the tenants fulfilled the conditions of the contract but when their number increased and they began to feel stronger against the landlords, they refused to deliver the stipulated half of the produce. There was a fight and the landlords were defeated and deprived of their portion (*Tarikh al-Kamil*, Ibn Athir, Part I, p. 253). The Prophet of Islam had surely known this and drawn his conclusions about landlordism and land tenures. The actual tiller of the soil never feels it just that a do-nothing absentee landlord, merely because of his legal title acquired by fair or foul means, should take away a considerable portion of the product of the tiller's labours. There was landlordism in the time of the Prophet though nothing like the system of feudalism that developed in most other countries.

Land is one of the most important and most potent instruments of production. There are essential differences between land and other instruments of production. Land was created by God and is a free gift of Nature; it is not a product of human labour. The fruits of land, however, can be increased and improved by human skill and human labour. So in the last analysis it is Nature plus nurture and nurture is the product of labour only. One could say that land is a free and universal gift of Nature like air and water. Let us see what attitude Islam adopted towards this vital problem.

It is ownership of large estates that creates big landlordism, feudalism or, in certain circumstances, serfdom. Islam struck the first blow at landlordism by the abolition of the law or custom of primogeniture by which the

elder son inherited the entire, undivided estate and left the other heirs in the lurch without any legacy. By making all sons and even daughters and other heirs inherit land in prescribed proportions, it initiated a tendency towards peasant-proprietorship. In the verse on inheritance the Qur'an laid down:

Men shall inherit what their parents and other relations of kinship leave at their death, and so shall women receive from them; whether the portion is great or small, all shall get their prescribed shares (iv. 7).

If Muslims had followed strictly the Islamic injunctions and if they had not fallen victims to monarchism and its chief resultant, autocratic landlordism, many problems which are disturbing the Muslim countries as a vicious inheritance from a degenerate past would not have arisen. And if the rest of the world had followed Islamic laws of inheritance, history would not have known the human slavery that resulted from feudalism through the ages. There is one danger, however, that if the parcelling out of land by inheritance leads to such fragmentation, then it would become unpracticable to cultivate small bits. In such cases an automatic remedy would work: an inheritor who does not consider it worthwhile to cultivate a small fragment of an acre would sell out and look for other sources of income. Reaching a certain limit the pressure on land is automatically relieved. In this respect some Muslim countries like Egypt have already passed good legislation fixing the size of a minimum holding without depriving the heirs of their due rights. The Punjab has also taken steps to avoid the fragmentation of land by inheritance.

Recently there has been a great debate going on about the land tenures allowed or disallowed by the Qur'an or the injunctions and practice of the Prophet himself or those of his successors who dealt with the land problem.

To whom does land belong?—that is the vital question. The Qur'an says that the land belongs to God but that does not enlighten one very much because the Qur'an

says in many places that all the heavens and the earth and all that they contain belong to God. Man, according to Islam, does not own anything; he is only a trustee of whatever is bestowed on him by God or even by his own labours. The question arises: what are the rights and duties of trusteeship and who is to be considered a trustee and to what extent? Islam has a tendency to prescribe that this trusteeship is not to be confined to a small class or a few privileged individuals but should be spread out as widely as possible among the whole of humanity so that every individual feels a sense of dignity and responsibility. The opinion of the experts on the agrarian problem is that limited peasant-proprietorship is best for the peasant as well as for the productivity of land. Sir Arthur Young after his travels in France came to the conclusion that the magic of peasant-proprietorship turns sand into gold and makes two blades of grass grow where only one grew before under the conditions of tenancy or hired labour. Most agricultural economists are agreed that feudalism as well as absentee landlordism are both bad for agricultural production. It has become almost axiomatic with socialists of all varieties that important instruments of production, big factories, big estates and mines must be nationalised. The problem of industrial capitalism is a product of special conditions in the highly industrialised nations of the West. The question how Islam, with its special ideology, would deal with such a situation, or whether Islam would allow such a situation to arise, we have already dealt with in another chapter. At present we will confine our attention to the Islamic attitude towards the land problem.

Marxism accepts as a postulate that feudalism was a necessary stage in the dialectical processes of historical materialism and then it passed through its inner logic to what the Marxist calls bourgeois industrialism or industrial capitalism. We will not enter into the polemic here to prove that this is not true of all human history in every clime and in every civilisation. But we will point out the fact that a good deal of the force of Russian

Revolution was derived from the peasantry that wanted effective possession and ownership of land. It was the tyranny of Russian feudalism which produced protesting reformers like Tolstoy and which shook the masses with the force of a volcanic eruption. The peasant is land-hungry and it is natural that he should feel that he is an inseparable part of the earth on which he spills his sweat. He and his land become organically one whole and any attempt to disrupt this natural unity is resisted or deeply resented.

In a truly Islamic State there would be peasant-proprietorship or holdings of a size that would ensure moderately good living for a family unit. A system of co-operative planning may develop if agricultural machinery is employed which becomes more economical in large-scale farming. There is a tendency now in almost all European countries to break up large estates and create peasant-proprietorships on a moderate scale. Where there are large tracts of cultivable land and the agricultural population is comparatively small, the holdings may become larger.

In the old world the question of nationalisation of capital and the nationalisation of factories did not exist, but communal ownership of land is a very old institution, a whole village commonly owning the village land and redistributing it each year or at intervals. Islam set an example of the nationalisation of land after acquiring by conquest the fertile lands of Syria, Persia and Egypt. During the time of the great Caliph 'Umar, which is a period of great Muslim political expansion, the Muslims asked the Caliph to distribute these lands among a small number of conquerors and make them feudal chiefs or landlords. But the farsighted 'Umar fought hard against this demand and declared the entire conquered land as State property, but the cultivators were not disturbed in their possession; they were allowed to retain their holdings subject to the payment of land revenue to the State. According to this precedent, almost all land in the Muslim countries belongs to the State and no cultivator has an absolute title of ownership. In spite of this, the

rights of the cultivators were virtually the rights of ownership; land became saleable and inheritable. But if at any time the conditions of life demand a change in the system of land tenures, the State has a right of appropriate readjustments because the State-ownership was never renounced. In the Qur'anic terminology where anything is said to belong to God or to the Prophet it means that it is State property to be used as the State thinks fit.

What Allah has bestowed on His Prophet from the property of these habitations, it is for Allah and His Prophet, for the near of the kin, for orphans and the poor and for travellers in need of help so that wealth may not circulate only among the rich. Whatever the Prophet grants you take it and what he withholds from you, desist from it. Fear God for He punishes the transgressors severely (lix. 7).

The most convincing argument of 'Umar for not distributing land as estates among the conquerors was that land does not multiply but people do and if absolute ownership is granted to some people in the present generation all those who come after shall have nothing left for them.

Now let us turn to the question of expropriation without any compensation. There is no example in the life of the Prophet or his immediate successors of forcibly acquiring land for State purposes without paying due compensation. The Prophet never bought any piece of land for private use but whenever he ordered a piece to be acquired for State purposes, suitable price was always paid. When the Prophet asked the Jews of Medina to quit because of their continued hostility and dangerous intrigues, their land was allowed to be sold. Caliph 'Umar also paid handsome prices for the lands which the Jews were asked to leave in Fidak and Wadi al-Qura. So when a Muslim State again begins to tread on the path of Islamic socialism, the rightful owners of any property, whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims, can never be dispossessed without compensation. Wholesale expropriation undertaken by the Nazis against the Jews or by the Bolsheviki in Russia cannot be allowed in

Islam, unless it is proved that an owner acquired it by unfair means.

There are examples in the reign of 'Umar which prove that the State must be watchful about land and its relation to the sustenance of the people. The Prophet himself had granted a large tract of land to Bilal but when 'Umar saw that he was leaving it uncultivated and making no proper use of it, he proposed to revoke the grant. Bilal resisted saying how a grant made by the Prophet himself could be revoked, but 'Umar was adamant about it, that the State has a right to revoke a grant of land if proper use is not made of it. It is an accepted principle of Islamic jurisprudence that land uncultivated for three years reverts to the State. To Jarir ibn 'Abdullah, Caliph 'Umar said: 'There is now a greater pressure of population, so the large tract of land granted to you may be returned'. But in this respect a substantial sum was paid in compensation. It is an accepted principle of Muslim law that the State has no right of expropriation of property honestly acquired and legitimately owned.

As in everything else, Islam offers a compromise between State-ownership or nationalisation of land and at the same time recommends ways and means of dividing all land into suitable private holdings with virtual rights of ownership for all practical purposes. As land is an unincreasable instrument of production, interests not only of the present generation but those of posterity too have to be taken into account so that those coming after may not suffer from a *status quo* in which no piece of land is left on the earth which a man could call his own to spend his labours on it whole-heartedly. As already stated, this was the crux of the whole argument of Caliph 'Umar when he refused to make his contemporaries the owners of large estates in perpetuity. The later jurists of Islam accepted this decision as final. The author of the classical work, *Kitab al-Amwal*, says that land revenue belongs collectively to the whole community, as legally the State representing the common people is the real owner. Sarkhasi too in his book *Mabsut*

(p. 55) says that all parts of Muslim lands are under the sovereignty and control of the head of the State because he represents the interests of the Muslim community. Excepting the power of outright expropriation of rightly-owned property, the State has the right to sanction any kind of land tenures. It can give away land into private proprietorships, charging land revenue, it can purchase large tracts and make them common property of a group, as the Prophet did it himself and his example was later on followed by Caliph 'Umar. Land, according to the Qur'an, is a universal gift of God, like water and air, and is meant for the benefit of all, men and animals alike.

The earth belongs to God; He gives it to His servants as He pleases (vii. 128).

Here Allah means the guardian of universal good, and land is at the disposal of those to whom this guardianship is delegated. In the chapter on Communism and Iqbal we have stated that Iqbal, the most representative Muslim thinker of modern times, considered this the correct interpretation of the Qur'anic view. The thoughts expressed by Mr. Ghulam Muhammad (later the Governor General of Pakistan) in his presidential address delivered at the International Muslim Economic Conference, December 1945, are worth quoting because they represent a viewpoint accepted as correct by the entire Muslim world:

The world is in the grip of a conflict about the ownership of land and the other major instruments of production. With respect to land the Qur'anic verdict is that all land belongs to Allah (although the heavens above and the air and water below also belong to Allah, the divine ownership of land is mentioned with particular emphasis). This is not a metaphysical doctrine but is one of the basic principles of Islamic jurisprudence. Another basic principle of Islam is that there is no right, individual or social, in which Allah (the guardian of common weal) has not a share. Islam has no place for feudalism in which the tenant is reduced to the condition of a helpless and rightless serf. If human experience devises a plan to increase the productivity of the soil, and the peasant or the worker on land does not suffer thereby, then it is the duty of an Islamic State to implement such a plan. If the law of inheritance, allowed to operate unchecked,

tends towards fragmentation into uneconomic holdings, then it is the duty of the State to remedy this defect. The public weal must never be sacrificed to satisfy individual vested interests. Caliph 'Umar had not allowed the Arabs to hold estates in the conquered territory and had denied rights of private ownership even prohibiting the Muslims to buy land in occupied territories, but during the reign of Caliph 'Uthman, the State having been stabilised, this ban was removed. Islam is not wedded to any particular system of land tenure; the abiding principle is social justice only.

The principles of Islam enunciated above with extreme simplicity and clarity are borne out by the attitude of the Prophet himself towards the land question. There were various systems of land tenure prevalent in the time of the Prophet; of these he prohibited some that entailed injustice and exploitation, and tolerated others with the proviso that no injustice was done in actual practice but gave preference to certain ways which were more in accord with the spirit of Islam. There was the system of dividing the produce between the owner and the cultivator but the owners made contracts with the tillers which affected adversely the interests of the latter. The Prophet prohibited contracts on such unjust terms. Rafi' ibn Khadij has transmitted many an advice given by the Prophet about the contracts of the division of produce between the owner and the tiller, which, in the main, tend to show that as the tiller was exploited in many ways, the Prophet disapproved of the system, though it is difficult to say that he definitely prohibited it under all circumstances. There was no system of cash rents in Medina but some of the later jurists held it to be justifiable. About the division of produce on any stipulated terms, the later jurists have disagreed, some holding it to be right and others holding it to be wrong. Again, it is Rafi' who has related a statement from the Prophet which shows that the Prophet disapproved of the system of division of produce. Rafi' relates it on the authority of his uncle Zahir that he said:

The Prophet prevented us from following a custom which benefited us (the landlords) very much. The Prophet called me and asked me as to what we did about our lands. I said, 'We give them to tenants

against payment of a part of the produce, sometimes a quarter of the harvest, and at other times, a quantity of dates or barley.' The Prophet said, 'Don't do that, cultivate the land yourself or let some others do it, otherwise it is better to leave it as it is'.

Rafi' adds that they agreed to follow this advice. In the traditions of the Prophet, however, there appears to be no advice against charging cash rent. The great jurist Imam Abu Hanifa, who has the largest number of followers in the Muslim world, is definitely against the division of produce between the owner and the tiller. But where land rent is charged or land revenue is collected, Islamic injunction is that it should be as light as possible. Islam adopted various measures about capitalistic or agrarian exploitation but the un-Islamic ways of life adopted by Muslims everywhere have made them deviate very much from the original spirit of Islam. Communism thrives on the bad feelings of disgruntled and exploited groups. The Russian Revolution owed much of its volcanic eruption to the feelings of the Russian peasantry because there was very little industrial proletariat there. The Chinese people too accepted Communism because it promised the common peasant better conditions of life. If Muslim countries do not seriously tackle the question of land and give a more equitable share to the tiller of the soil, removing from his neck the yoke of exploiting landlordism, there is a grave danger of their being lured and trapped by Communism. They do not know the realities of the total programme of Communism; they do not know its anti-God campaigns; they are not aware of the total regimentation of life imposed by a party that has grabbed power; they do not know that the ownership of small holdings that they desire will be almost completely submerged in impersonal collectivism; they do not know that their private convictions and personal liberties too will be invaded. They have only heard that the peasants and workers have become sovereign in an equalitarian paradise. There are only two forces that may push the Muslim world into the lap of Russian Communism: one is European

imperialism and the other is the unreformed social and economic life of Muslim society almost everywhere. If they are made to realise that Islam offers a better type of social and economic democracy and creates a healthy balance between individual liberty and collective welfare and security, they will not only save themselves but present a better model to the world to be tried and copied. Most Muslims vaguely believe that Islam possesses a third ideology, different from Capitalism and Communism, and many of them hope to fulfil a mission entrusted to them by Providence. But in the stern realities of the world and faced with brute facts, mere hopes and aspirations are not enough unless they are converted into a faith that moves mountains. All deep faiths shared by a large group can create upheavals and transformations; even false faiths can become volcanic as we have witnessed during our own life. The universal cure for the Muslim malaise and depression is the vitalising effect of genuine Islam. Communism is a challenge.

Recapitulation

THIS book has dealt with various theoretical and practical aspects of Russian Communism, Marxism and Islam. In the discussion and exposition there has occurred some unavoidable overlapping and repetition. To compare and contrast the two in a precise and concise manner appears to be necessary. Let us attempt to give a summary embodying the basic issues.

Ways of life are ultimately based on the views of life. The views of human life and of existence in general of Islam and Marxism differ so fundamentally that there is no point of contact, and no compromise between the two is possible. For Marxism, ultimate reality is matter as opposed to mind or spirit. For Islam, the ground of all existence is God, a conscious and purposeful creator, whose essential attribute is providence, love, or goodness. For a Muslim, life embodies purposes derived from the nature and will of God. Matter of the materialists is not self-subsistent nor self-regulative, nor teleological nor the generator and fulfiller of purposes. For Islam existence has a spiritual background and even matter is infused with spirit, otherwise it could not be suited to the purposes of either merely biological or spiritual existence. Consistently with the logic of materialism, matter, the ultimate reality of Marxism, ought to be devoid of all purposes, and should not be able to lend itself to the creation or preservation of values. But as life without a belief in the reality of values would be valueless and would offer no incentives for action, Marxism smuggled in teleology and values through a back-door. Matter

is supposed to act dialectically, that is to say, it creates a situation and then automatically negates it and a further negation of this negation creates what is called a higher synthesis. All existence—physical, mental, and moral—is supposed to be explained by this process which is really an abortive concept borrowed from Hegel and given a materialistic twist. Through this legerdemain, matter whose nature, according to materialism, should be essentially unteleological, begins to create and further the purposes of life.

For Islam all existence has a spiritual basis, and human life, being the highest manifestation of it on earth, has a spiritual background and a spiritual purpose. As Marxism identifies ultimate reality with matter so human existence too is identified with human bodies, which are results of a dialectical process of matter, and the purpose of human life is adaptation to its material environment. Body is nothing but a highly specialised arrangement of matter, and the brain secretes thoughts and emotions as the liver secretes bile. No soul exists that transcends the bodily functions or that could survive after the dissolution of the body. God, soul and immortality form a trinity of fiction. According to Marxism, there could be no absolute truth or goodness; all truths are the product of evanescent material relations. There are no eternal truths. This was the position of Greek Sophists during the time of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, against which all the three strove to prove the absoluteness of truth and goodness. Islam believes in eternal truth and God is identified with eternal truth and eternal goodness which is an aspect of eternal truth. All the relativities of life and the phenomenal changes are rooted in noumenal absolutes, as even Einstein's law of relativity is itself not relative but based on a certain concept of the absolute. Islam is theistic and Communism is atheistic, so it is impossible for a Muslim to consider Muhammad and Marx to be right at the same time; if the view of the one is right, the view of the other is categorically false. Communism is not merely a socialistically

planned economy; if it were only that, many a theistic nation would be glad to learn from it and consider it a welcome contribution to the establishment of social justice, because as the Marxists are fond of repeating 'a man has to eat before he can fulfil any other purposes of life'. But Communism is not merely that; it is a *Weltanschauung*, a materialistic view of all existence and an atheistic creed firmly believed and fanatically propagated. As a creed it comes into a headlong collision with the theistic creed of Islam. As you cannot serve God and mammon at the same time, so you cannot believe in Islam and atheistic Communism at the same time.

Islam believes in suprasensible and supra-material reality, though it affirms the reality of sense, knowledge and of matter in its limited sphere. In the infinity of life, material existence is a passing moment and a transitory phase. The unseen is infinitely greater than the seen. For Marxism there is no unseen except as yet unrealised possibilities of matter itself.

With respect to ethics, Islam believes that the essentials of morality are universal, objective and absolute, although human individuals and human institutions approximate to these essentials in various degrees. There is an absolute truth that man has to realise by progressive efforts and by degrees and there is an absolute goodness which ought to form the common basis of all humanity. Partial truths are only broken lights of the eternal effulgence. The Marxists have repudiated all morality that prophets and saints and disinterestedly good men of all ages have preached and practised. They say that these moral ideals and ethical values were the reflections of the ages of exploitation. They agree with Nietzsche in holding that all Christian morality is slave-morality, an invention of the weak and downtrodden slaves to protect themselves against the might of the strong by exalting humility over pride and submission over self-assertion. The weak could not overthrow the strong and the rich by force, so they barred their entry into Heaven to which only the meek and the poor shall be admitted. The

Marxists would think much the same about Islamic ethics. They propose to scrap all old morality and replace it by a new one. By them all values are to be re-valued, or devalued. Much of the time-honoured good would be dubbed as evil and much of spiritually abhorred evil would assume the sacred hue of virtue. Do the Muslims want the Qur'anic morality, the morality of Muhammad and all the Prophets to be considered as outmoded or positively vicious?

Islam emphasised the belief in the essential unity of humanity as it considered the unity of God to be the fundamental article of faith. Christianity too has inculcated belief in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Marxism also professes faith in one world and one humanity. Like Islam it claims to transcend racial and national distinctions. The great charge of Communism against capitalism and imperialism is that they divide humanity into hostile nations, dominant and dominated nations and races, and at the same time split up each nation into antagonistic classes of the economically exploiting and the economically exploited. Like many of the charges levelled against non-communistic systems and societies, these accusations are, to a considerable extent, based on actual and historical facts. But the remedies offered are no better than those offered by the protagonists of the systems criticised. Communism proposes to establish a classless society by a ruthless class-war. Attempts are made to convince the under-privileged that no reforms can avail and the progressive amelioration of the condition of the workers and the peasants is impossible. In the classes that they call have-nots they inculcate hostility, inoculating them with the poison of implacable hatred. Islam too aims at a classless society but does not preach class-hatred. In a good Islamic society there will naturally be some who are more gifted by Nature and more prosperous through greater knowledge, better character and more honest labour, socially and materially rewarded. There will be individual differences but no class gulfs. Islamic economic and social

system would constantly tend to level inordinate inequalities. Those who are more gifted with any goods of life are exhorted to share them with those who are less gifted, not by an arithmetical levelling but by helping the down-and-out to rise. But Islam knowing fully well the egoistic tendencies of human nature does not stop merely at moral exhortation. It promulgates economic measures and laws that prevent the concentration of wealth in limited groups. Preaching of class-war is alien to the entire spirit of Islam, not because it wants to fortify privileged classes but because it starts with envisaging a society in which antagonistic classes cannot be created. It enjoins a capital levy on all surpluses beyond a certain minimum, it spreads out lands and other assets of the deceased by inheritance, it prohibits living on unearned income in the form of usury, it prevents the formation of a parasitical aristocracy or priesthood, it deprecates all speculative trading of the nature of a gamble and adopts various measures against the hoarding of national wealth. It sanctions earning any amount of wealth by labour and skill, provided it is not done through exploitation. Private capital can be created and inherited. Private property can be acquired, bought and sold. But there is no *laissez-faire* in Islam; all rights are subject to the demands of social justice and limited by provisions of the law.)

As to the claim of creating a classless society, which society in the world is more classless than Islamic society? For the Muslims, nationalistic or racial barriers have no meaning and within a single society the poor man is not considered an outcaste; he is not treated with indifference or contempt as the proletarian worker is treated in some industrial countries. If Muslim society has deviated much from the ideal of Islam, the remedy lies in incorporating more of Islam in their social, political and economic life and not looking to Communism to cure their ills through a relentless class-conflict. Islam would not wipe out the rich; it would tend to Muslimise them.

Has Russian Communism succeeded in creating an

equalitarian classless society? Are there not great differences of wages, emoluments and amenities between the Communists at the top and the Communists or mere poor workers at the bottom? Communism lured the poor workers by a Utopia, but when that Utopia is not materialised, the excuse presented and accepted by many a gullible individual is that Russia is on the way to Communism and that it is at present at the stage of an almost bourgeois socialism. The worker is not yet better off than in many a so-called capitalist land with an economy still based on private profit but considerably limited by legislation and a progressive system of taxation.

There is much to be said for economic planning on a nation-wide scale for prescribed periods. But Russian fanaticism went to extreme lengths in its planning. It sucked the entire life of every individual without leaving an iota of personal choice. The worker's work, his mode of life, his behaviour, his morality, his manners, his conscience, his religion, his education, his aspirations and his attitude towards art and literature were all swallowed up by omnibus planning which would leave no shred of personality with any individual to do with it as he pleases. This sort of total planning is not the pattern which Islam has inculcated. Islam allows private property and private trade. It allows freedom of conscience and freedom to propagate one's beliefs. It allows to individuals and groups the freedom of their ways of life. It respects even the personal laws of various communities in an Islamic State and would allow their cases to be judged by their own laws and by their own judges. Forced labour, still so prevalent in Russia, is prohibited in Islam. Nobody can be compelled to work against his own will and contrary to his own choice. In a Muslim society a man would be free to choose his work and his place of work. He has the freedom to work and the freedom not to work, which is sometimes an equally valuable variety of freedom.

Islam considers liberty to be the foundation of all human values and human dignity. It is liberty that distinguishes man from the rest of creation. Our wills

ought to be somehow ours, although we may not be able to establish the reality of freewill by psychological analysis or logical argument. The Qur'an stands for the omnipotence and omniscience of God but affirms with great emphasis also the freedom of choice granted to man. All moral judgements and the sense of moral obligation are based on the postulate of indeterminism. Man has not succeeded to grasp intellectually the simultaneity of divine omnipotence and human freewill. But the very legend of the Fall of Adam signifies free exercise of will. The totalitarian State sacrifices individual liberty at the altar of orderliness that tolerates no weak links in the chain of an omnibus organisation. The totalitarian mode of working is that a group of individuals acquire power and then go on augmenting it by applying it ruthlessly. How true it is that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely! According to the creed of theism, it is only the all-powerful God Whom power does not corrupt because divine power is used for providence and love. The Qur'an teaches that the almighty Creator could have made everyone good and a believer but He did not choose to do so. Compulsory law-abidingness is the destiny of all sub-human existence, but the liberty of choice emerges with man. The Qur'anic corollary from this act of the Creator is that no one is to be made compulsorily good. The very essence of virtue is the free choice of a right alternative when it was open for the chooser to select the wrong one. Islam has repudiated the perverted and debasing doctrine of original sin also, because it debars man from right choosing, his original nature having been made corrupt on account of a sin committed by his first progenitor. Islam teaches that for every human being the ways of virtue as well as of vice are open. By choosing the right path freely, he rises superior to the compulsory lawfulness of physical nature and the natural piety of the angels. It is through the right use of liberty that man begins to assimilate divine attributes and starts on the eternal journey towards divinity. Human goodness

is of such a nature that compulsory virtue becomes a contradiction in terms. Islam realised this fact so emphatically that it enunciated it as a fundamental principle that in matters of religious belief no compulsion is allowed. Islam had to take up arms to defend the liberty of conscience. The Prophet and his followers fought not to propagate their creed by force but to establish their right and the right of everyone else to believe as he chose and to practise his religion as he pleased. The moment Islam had established the principle of freedom of conscience and the enemies of human liberty were laid low, Muslims and non-Muslims alike were granted equal fundamental rights. The great Caliph 'Umar would not compel his own Christian slave to accept Islam when the latter did not choose to do it. This is the issue on which Islam and Western liberal democracies can make a common cause, though Islam is much ahead of what they practise. The Western powers do not grant any equality of opportunity and individual liberty to all those whom vested interests suppress and oppress. They do not grant the same liberties to the coloured races over whom they rule and whom they exploit economically. But in spite of all these shortcomings and deviations from the ideal, they still profess belief in individual liberty, be that liberty confined as yet to their own nations and races. Those who are not yet quite free have at least the freedom to struggle for it and wrench it gradually from their oppressors. Democratic nations cannot for long rule over other nations undemocratically. England had to relinquish a great empire because the colonies and dependencies refused to be tied eternally to the apron-strings of a distant parliament. England lost the U.S.A. because of the stupidity of her statesmen then in power but that loss made them wise in dealing with their other colonies. India and Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon were granted freedom to build their own destinies but there are still Asiatic and African territories under imperialistic, colonial domination. France is more imperialistic than England with respect to

her colonies in spite of the French revolutionary slogans of liberty, fraternity and equality. An Asiatic and a Muslim writer has much to complain about the democratic States of the West but still, if given a choice, he would never prefer Russian tyranny to even a limited democracy that Western democratic powers allow those who are still under their domination. The reason lies in the difference of the two systems. Russian Communism is the worst kind of fanaticism that has ever disgraced history. Its leaders evolved a creed which they believe to be absolute truth, and they consider it their duty that this creed should triumph through stratagem and through violence. Their ideology brooks no opposition, either political or intellectual. It is one party that rules, formulates the tenets of the creed, guides all political and economic life, allows no criticism of its basic principles. All education from kindergarten to the university stage is meant to inculcate belief in the infallibility of the Soviet creed. No criticism is allowed or tolerated. No educational, social or informational contacts with the outside world, which thinks differently, are permitted. The theory of conditioning was perfected by a great Russian scientist practising on dogs and rats, and its great power having been established, it has been applied to a large mass of humanity under Russian control. All differing critics have been exiled or liquidated or terrorised into silence. Only the conditioned masses are left who believe in the truth of what they have been taught. I do not believe that the generation of Russians born and grown up during the last two or three decades have any feeling of being oppressed by any tyrannical regime. They do not miss what they have never known. The meaning of liberty is so altered for them that it has lost entirely its time-honoured connotation. The meaning of culture too is changed. No one in Russia understands that culture was built up by the free individualistic geniuses of humanity. Nothing that is regimented or merely prescribed has any creative or cultural value. They think that culture is that which an entire herd is made

to believe and act upon with uniformity. No book which is not strictly according to the party line can be printed or published in Russia. The Bible or the Qur'an cannot be published or imported, because all press is State-controlled and all imports too are State-controlled. Whatever be the crimes of Western democracies—and they are many—they would pale into insignificance in comparison with this slavery of the human spirit when the human spirit has been made to hug its chains. Many crimes are committed in the name of liberty, but the great crime of the suppression of all human liberty has no parallel. Ever since industrial capitalism, imperialism and colonialism gained power, the world of Islam has suffered much at the hands of all these types of organised robbery. Imperialism is still exploiting many a backward Muslim population and it is still trying to tighten its hold on what it gained by force or fraud in the past centuries. It is driving more than one Muslim nation to look to Russia for assistance to be freed from their Western masters. The Muslim world is on the horns of a dilemma; it is between the devil of Western imperialism and the deep sea of Russian Communism. With the wrong handling of the Chinese situation, the great Chinese nation has become Communist and an ally of Russia. But Western imperialistic diplomacy seems to have become too blind by greed to learn a lesson. The British are supposed to be politically wiser than the other European nations. They experimented with fair-play and liberality and gained the friendship and alliance of those who had hitherto struggled against them; their former enemies became their allies and their trade with the liberated countries increased by leaps and bounds. Will they be equally wise with the Iranians and the Egyptians? Will not the goodwill of these nations be more valuable to them than forcible possession of their territories or unjust exploitation of their natural resources. British diplomacy was unjust and foolish about Palestine; they made the Arab world unite against them and the rest of the Muslim world potentially

unsympathetic or hostile. I must repeat here that no Muslim country is a lover of Russian Communism, because the latter is atheistic and fanatically tyrannical, while every Muslim nation believes in the truth of Islam and considers it as the panacea of all ills, but their poor and exploited citizens demand social and economic justice, which, if denied by their own privileged countrymen, makes them look to Russia sometimes as a paradise where there is no unemployment and elementary needs are guaranteed by the State. The small Communist groups keep up that illusion everywhere. But there is a far greater mass of the under-privileged who sincerely believe that if the statesmen and leaders act upon Islam, elementary needs could be provided for all. The ideal picture before the imagination of every Muslim is that of the State and society created by the Prophet of Islam and his companions. They believe that a democratic State and society with equalitarian trends can be revived and ought to be revived. If, however, their condition is not bettered by the removal of colonial exploitation or by economic reconstruction in the lands now politically free, there is a danger of their succumbing to Russian propaganda in despair and desperation.

THE END

